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THE
CHURCH, CULTURE AND LIBERTY

BY

THE MOST REVEREND
MARTIN JOHN SPALDING, D.D.
Archbishop of Baltimore

NEWLY EDITED
WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
JOHN C. REVILLE, S.J., Ph.D.

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Archbishop of New York

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INTRODUCTION

ON July 17, 1834, the halls of the College of Propaganda in Rome presented a spectacle which recalled the old days and traditions of university life in Catholic Europe. The chief actor in the scene which then took place was a young aspirant to the priesthood from that great Republic of the West of whose growing power and splendor, marvelous tales had been spread among the inhabitants of the Old World. When the young levite reached Rome from the United States, he received a letter from the saintly Flaget, in which the pioneer Bishop of Bardstown, and later of Louisville, had written: "In sending you to Rome, I had your own good in view; but I must confess . . . that the honor of our holy religion in Kentucky was the first object I had in contemplation in procuring for you the extraordinary advantages which you now enjoy" (Shea, "History of the Catholic Church in the United States," vol. iv, p. 195).

The Bishop's double purpose, the events of that day showed, was abundantly attained. The young American, in less than a month, was to be ordained priest. Before that honor was conferred upon him, he had chosen to present for defense, before the professors of the Propaganda and all who might choose to present themselves in the scholastic lists, 256 propositions, or theses, selected from the entire range of theology, Church history and Canon Law. On the day appointed, for more than six hours, the young Kentuckian stood by his guns, never for a moment yielding the positions he had chosen to hold, displaying at every turn of the scholastic contest, a grasp of

the doctrines he championed, an understanding of the objections brought against them and a readiness and clarity in their solution, together with a comprehensive knowledge of the entire field of sacred science, which astonished the hearers, the presiding officer of the debate and the objectors.

The presiding officer in that scholastic tournament was the famous Angelo Mai, the discoverer of the lost books of Cicero's *De Republica*, the decipherer and interpreter of century-old palimpsests. Among the objectors was the future Cardinal Wiseman, who, arguing from Arabic and Persian analogies in connection with the words of institution of the Blessed Eucharist, found the youthful champion always ready with an apt and convincing answer. Two Jesuits, whose theological knowledge had won a European reputation, Anthony Kohlmann, who once counted the future Leo XIII among his pupils and whose name is familiar to New York Catholics, among whose forbears he once labored; and Perrone, long versed in the subtleties of scholastic lore and one of the most learned men of his times, attacked the American's position on the Primacy of the Pope. Here the defendant remained unshaken. Although Kohlmann and Perrone, arguing both from Scripture, history and Canon Law, tried every scholastic strategem and device to trip him, the young champion flung back their arguments with a mastery of self and his own case, and in such sonorous Latin, that he won the admiration of his scholarly opponents and the cheers and plaudits of his classmates. Mezzofanti, greatest of polyglots, who spoke fluently more than thirty languages, three times as many at least as Mithridates or Cleopatra, also broke a lance with him. At the close of the tourney, the presiding officer and the illustrious objectors warmly congratulated the defendant, while his fellow-students carried him away in triumph.

The young Kentuckian was Martin John Spalding. American Catholics gratefully and lovingly recall that

great name—“*clarum et venerabile nomen.*” John Carroll, the first Archbishop of Baltimore, is the founder of the American Hierarchy. With him as co-founders Americans hold in reverence the names and the apostolic deeds of his brethren, Cheverus of Boston, Flaget of Bardstown, Dubois of New York, Egan of Philadelphia. With Flaget of Bardstown, and later of Louisville, came the “bishops on horseback,” who, traveling hundreds of miles like pioneers, explorers and hunters, toiled as missionaries among Indians and whites, making their cathedrals under the Gothic arches of the primeval forest and their episcopal palaces in the wigwam of the Indian or the trapper’s hut. The work of these “bishops on horseback” is one of the most glorious pages in the history of the Church, and it is distinctively American.

Martin John Spalding does not belong so entirely to that episcopal “light cavalry,” although in Kentucky and when Archbishop of Baltimore, he often rode many a mile through the parishes of his diocese on his pastoral duties. With John Hughes, of New York, he belongs rather to the champion or “fighting Bishops,” who gallantly defended the Church against the attacks of her enemies. Like John Hughes, Martin John Spalding was a tower of strength to his brethren and children in the Faith. Providence watched in a special manner over the destinies of the American Republic in giving us Washington in the hour of our greatest national crisis, and in reenforcing the gift by sending men like Jefferson, Madison and Monroe as his successors to carry on his work. Providence is equally to be seen in the gift to the Church in the United States of men like Hughes, Francis Patrick Kenrick, Spalding’s predecessor in the see of Carroll, and Spalding himself, to carry on the mission and the work of the first Archbishop of Baltimore.

In the present work, “The Church, Culture and Liberty,” taken from Archbishop Spalding’s *Miscellanea*

(Louisville, 1853), the reader will find a sample at least of the methods used in the defense of the Church, by the Archbishop of Baltimore. He knew the mind and the temperament of his countrymen. A thorough American himself and a lover of what is best and noble in the American character, and there is much to be loved and admired in it, he could appeal to it with singular force and effectiveness. He knew that the American was business-like, direct; that he loved the concrete, that he wanted above all things facts, that he liked arguments, logically linked together, coherent, forcible, fair, but that he had then, as he has to-day, but little relish for the abstruse and recondite, that he admired strong and beautiful language, but had little use for mere rhetoric or the artifices of the school.

These essays are not the work of a mere scholar, who in the quiet of his study calmly writes and furbishes his periods and enjoys the leisure necessary to put back ill-chiseled and roughly hammered lines on the anvil. The author writes them under the stress of momentous issues for the needs of the hour. The lecture platform and the roaring machines of the daily press, a-clamor with slanders against the Church and misrepresentations of her mission and her history, were at the moment, perhaps when he was far from books of reference and notes, with scarcely any time to prepare for his work, summoning him to become the apologist of the Faith, of the Church and her doctrines. But Martin John Spalding was ready. Then the accumulated treasures of years of study in Rome, in Bardstown, as a priest on the missions of Kentucky seemed suddenly to spring unbidden, almost, to his pen. He speaks and writes out of the fullness of his heart. Hence the directness, the simplicity, the naturalness of these essays.

They sometimes lack polish and elegance. But they are manly in tone. They ring with sincerity and conviction. They pierce right to the core of a question. They carry persuasion, and are clothed with that eloquence native to

any man, when he is terribly in earnest about some important question, which has spoken its message to himself, and which he wishes to carry home to others with equal power.

In reading some of them, especially the initial essay, the reader must carry his mind back three-quarters of a century to the eventful days of 1855, when a storm of persecution was brewing against the Church, worse even than that which Americans of the last years of the nineteenth century have known in the outbursts of bigotry of the American Protective Association, the "A. P. A.," and of which we witness a recrudescence in the comico-tragical buffooneries, but objectionable and dangerous manifestations, of the Ku Klux Klan.

The Bishop of Louisville, Martin John Spalding, must have been astonished when he beheld the lengths to which bigotry and prejudice could drive a people so tolerant as Americans. In the first chapter of this volume, the author gives a vivid picture of the scenes of disorder and bigotry of which Catholic Americans were the victims, during the days of the Native American and Know-Nothing agitation. As far back as 1831 a strong feeling of "Nativism" arose against foreigners and especially against Catholics, whose steadily increasing numbers were deemed to be a menace to our republican institutions, of which, on the contrary, they have always been most loyal supporters. Among its fundamental principles, the Native American party advocated the proscription of all those who professed the Roman Catholic faith, as well as their exclusion from all offices whether in the Federal, State or municipal government.

The spirit of "Nativism," though not fully organized against Catholics until the beginning of 1840, had never been absent from the country. While the principle of freedom of religious worship was adopted by the Constitution (Art. VI) and further secured by the Amendment

adopted in 1791, declaring that Congress "shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof," individual States retained a decidedly anti-Catholic legislation. New Jersey retained such an organic law down to 1844. It was only as late as 1877 that New Hampshire blotted from its Constitution the provision barring Roman Catholics from holding office in that State. Until 1821 the Constitution of New York, retained the provisions introduced by John Jay, which denied citizenship to every foreign-born Catholic, unless, even in matters ecclesiastical, he would renounce all allegiance to the Pope.

It seems almost incredible that Americans proverbially tolerant, the Americans especially of three generations ago, with so many of the finer traits of their heroic fathers still lingering among them, should be guilty of the excesses then committed. But those who took part in them were grossly deluded men, fired to frenzy by agitators, who worked upon the inborn instincts of Americans against foreign interference in American affairs and their love of liberty. They were told that Rome and Catholicism were the enemies of progress and of republican institutions. They too readily believed. The burning of the Ursuline Convent at Charlestown, Massachusetts, in 1834, which happened near the beginning of the Native American movement, and the bloody riots at Newark, New Jersey, and in Philadelphia, in 1844, when several Catholic churches were attacked by the mob, showed but too painfully to what extent, once the torrent of fanaticism is let loose, even the most tolerant and broad-minded may be driven, under the lash of criminal leaders.

To the Native American party, the Know-Nothings succeeded, and revived the principles of the former on a larger and more effective scale. Organized in New York, in 1852, the party consolidated into a central union all the fragments of the older Native American party, such as the

“Order of United Americans,” “Sons of America,” “United American Mechanics of the United States,” and threatened at one time to turn the country into one vast fortress of bigotry and persecution. They were successful for a time in local elections in Baltimore, New York, Philadelphia and San Francisco. Of its persecuting spirit, Catholics, Irish Catholics, especially, were the principal, almost the only victims. At the height of the movement, Archbishop Bedini, Papal Legate to Brazil, and bearing a friendly message from Pius IX to President Franklin Pierce, was grossly insulted by the press. He was jeered and threatened in public, and several times was in jeopardy of his life at the hands of an infuriated mob. In Newark, the following year, 1854, the mob invaded and all but destroyed the Church of St. Mary’s. In the same year, Father John Bapst, a Jesuit veteran of the Indian missions, then zealously carrying on his apostolate of peace amidst his little flock at Ellsworth, Maine, was dragged from his bed, robbed, tarred and feathered, and subjected to the most indecent and cruel torments. In spite of his sufferings, the heroic priest, left half dead by his tormentors, had the indomitable courage to offer up the Holy Sacrifice, the next morning, for his parishioners, who in the midst of their tears of sorrow for his sufferings, could not but admire his heroism. The fires of hatred and persecution flamed in Dorchester and Lawrence, Massachusetts, in Manchester, New Hampshire, in Galveston, Texas, in Massillon, Ohio, in Louisville, Kentucky, where one might imagine that the virtues of Martin John Spalding, the embodiment of every high American ideal, might have sufficed to stay the hands of the un-American mob which attempted to burn his cathedral. After the events of that “Bloody Monday,” August 5, 1854, Bishop Spalding wrote to his friend, Bishop Kenrick of Philadelphia:

We have just passed through a reign of terror surpassed only by the Philadelphia riots. Nearly one hundred poor

Irish have been butchered or burned, and some twenty houses have been consumed in the flames. The city authorities, all Know-Nothings, looked calmly on, and they are now endeavoring to lay the blame on the Catholics ("Life of Archbishop Spalding," by John L. Spalding, p. 185).

Unfortunately the tide of anti-Catholic bigotry was growing. It seemed at one time that Know-Nothingism would sweep the country. In 1855 it elected a governor and a legislature in Massachusetts; in 1855 and 1856 it polled 122,000 and 146,000 votes in New York State. In 1855 it carried nine States in the elections. That same year Congress counted as many as seventy-five members elected on the Know-Nothing ticket. In 1855, however, the party suffered a decisive check in Virginia in the election of Henry A. Wise, who came out openly against politics and tactics which were the very opposite of the principles for which Washington and the men of Virginia of a former time, had so gallantly drawn the sword. When, in 1856, the Know-Nothings at Philadelphia nominated former President Fillmore for president, and Andrew Jackson Donelson of Tennessee for vice-president, the country seemed wearied of the fratricidal struggle. The Know-Nothing candidate, once president of the whole country, one whom the persecuted Irish Catholics recognized as the rightfully elected executive of the Republic and by them respected as such, now chose to dim whatever glory he had formerly achieved by unmanly subserviency to mob rule. But he was doomed to an ignominious defeat. His Democratic opponent, James Buchanan, was triumphantly elected, winning 174 electoral votes, while Fillmore obtained but eight. Fremont, running on the Free Soil ticket, received 114. These elections proved that as an organized party Know-Nothingism had passed out of existence and that the American people were weary of religious strife, and had regained their normal balance and spirit of fair play.

The Catholics of America, just after a war in which they played their part as gallantly as any body of our other citizens, see the revival of anti-Catholic prejudice manifested in the Ku Klux Klan. Archbishop Spalding's chapters will recall to them those fatal years of the bitter anti-Catholic bigotry shown by the Native American party and Know-Nothingism. They can thank God that their forefathers in the Faith were not then left without champions. With Francis Patrick Kenrick in Philadelphia, the mighty John Hughes in New York, and Martin John Spalding in Louisville and Baltimore, they had men to speak up for them and lead them in battle.

For that struggle the young Kentuckian of the brilliant days of the Propaganda was well prepared. Born near Bardstown, on the Rolling Fork, May 13, 1810, he sprang from an old Maryland family, which had come from St. Mary's County in the Land of the Sanctuary to build up a settlement in Kentucky. He was baptized by the saintly Father Charles Nerinckz, the fame of whose virtues still clings to the early days and memories of that romantic region. The home of the future Archbishop was a fit nursery for the sturdy and Catholic virtues which flourished under the roof of what was half stockade, half log hut. The mother, Henrietta Hamilton, the father, Richard Spalding, were model Catholics and ruled over a model household. Morning and night prayers and the Rosary recited in common, the Sacraments regularly received, labor and work on the farm; the plough, the woodsman's axe, the rifle and the rod, the free spaces of the prairies, God's clear sunlight in the open fields, frugality and simplicity, made of these dwellers by the Rolling Fork a pure and vigorous race. A log schoolhouse was the first scholastic training ground for the young Kentuckian. As a child, Martin John trudged to the rude little hut where he learned his letters and his catechism. St. Mary's College, Lebanon, standing like a bulwark of the Faith and civilization amid

the surrounding wilderness, entered the boy on its roster in 1821, and when he was little more than fourteen, he was professor of mathematics in the gallant little college, whose romantic history is an eloquent reminder of the sacrifices which in those early days, American Catholics made for the culture and the religion of their children. "It is a small college," as our Daniel Webster said of another frontier post of learning on an historical occasion, but it is dear to all Catholics. It cannot have been unworthy of its high calling, since it gave us in young Martin such a splendid specimen of all that we love best in the American character. The boy-professor soon made a state-wide reputation for himself, and many a schoolmaster or surveyor from the neighborhood came to try him with "sums" and problems, only to marvel at his learning and skill. After "graduating" in 1826, and a four years' course at Bardstown Seminary, he went, as we have seen, to Rome and completed his studies there. After his ordination to the priesthood (Aug. 13, 1834), his only ideal in life, which the lasting influences of a thoroughly Christian family life had fostered, he returned to his old Kentucky home, and was assigned by Bishop Flaget to Bardstown, where he was made pastor of the cathedral.

In the pulpit, with the pen, on the missions, in every field which zeal opened to him, Father Spalding became a leader. Bishop Flaget was not disappointed in the high hopes he had formed of his protégé, and when his see was transferred from Bardstown—a name that recalls so many gallant things to American Catholics—to Louisville, he was appointed Vicar-General by Bishop Flaget, and when that great leader died, he was made Bishop of Louisville.

His labors in Louisville (1850-1864), and in Baltimore, to which see he was transferred in 1864 on the death of his friend, Francis Patrick Kenrick, form a noble page in the history of the American Church. As the reader of the present volume will easily see from the chapters set before

him, Archbishop Spalding combined wisdom, prudence, and fortitude. Splendidly equipped intellectually, armed with all the weapons of theology and history, he had still nobler gifts of heart. He was tender and strong, unswerving in the cause of truth, but yielding in just and charitable measure to the prejudices and weaknesses of the erring.

The vigorous Catholic controversialist, Orestes A. Brownson, with whom at one time the Archbishop had some misunderstanding, of no very important consequence, thought him a little too condescending towards Protestantism, or rather towards Protestants, especially if they were Marylanders or Kentuckians (Brownson's "Works," vol. xiv, p. 503). But Brownson "was ever a fighter," and mistook, as he later on acknowledged, the character of the Archbishop, and in his manly way openly recognized his mistake. To one reading the works of the American prelate to-day the fault mentioned by Brownson does not appear. It cannot be said that the interests of truth were ever jeopardized in act or in writing by the great Kentuckian. He united moderation and prudence to courage and sincerity. It is a combination often wanting in the defenders of truth.

In spite of his pastoral labors, Archbishop Spalding was a fairly voluminous writer. Besides the *Miscellanea* (1853) of which "The Church, Culture and Liberty" is a small, but important fragment, we have from his pen "The Evidences of Catholicity," a series of lectures delivered in 1844-1845. Faithful to his one purpose of suiting his instructions to the needs of his hearers, the author leaves aside the more abstruse questions of theology and brings home to his hearers the fundamental truths of the Church in a forcible and popular form. For that reason, the "Evidences" have been misunderstood. They were not intended to be a methodical and formal exposition of theology, but the familiar instructions of a pastor to his people and to seekers after truth. His "History of the Protestant

Reformation" (1860) was also severely criticised by Brownson, who complained that "it did not go deep enough into the question and give us the real and more recondite causes of that disastrous event" (Brownson's "Works," vol. xiv, p. 503). In reviewing this judgment, he added: "Perhaps we were wrong." The formidable controversialist was in truth, partly at least, in error. The work, written for an immediate need, in refutation of D'Aubigné's "History of the Reformation" bears, no doubt, traces of haste, and lacks what the modern school calls "documentation," control, in other words, of historical sources. His first purpose was not so much to expose the causes of the Reformation, as to answer D'Aubigné's misrepresentations. But causes are by no means overlooked. The very first pages give evidence of this. The book, not as well equipped in some things, as the author himself would acknowledge, was a good representative of those "shock troops," which a defender of the truth must now and then fling into the trenches to fight the cause of truth, even though they be not entirely ready. It had its evident weaknesses, but it was fundamentally sound and did effective work. In reading "The Life and Times of Benedict Joseph Flaget" (1852) which Bishop Spalding wrote as a tribute to his predecessor in the see of Louisville, we find all the warmth of affection which he felt for that gentle yet sturdy leader, who has left such an enduring memory in the annals of the Church in the United States.

Of the book from which have been culled the chapters on "The Church, Culture and Liberty," Brownson, who, as we have seen, always spoke out his mind fearlessly, even when he had unpleasant things to say, had nothing but praise. Writing in the eleventh volume of his "Works" (p. 551) he says of the *Miscellanea*: "It should be in every public and private library in the country, and studied by every American who makes the least pretension to literary taste and judgment; for it is really one of the richest and

most valuable works that have ever proceeded from an American author."

It is the production of a distinguished American prelate, who feels that this is his own, his native land, and who identifies himself with the American people, and consults their interests as his own. He speaks to us from an American heart, and what he says is hardly less valuable under the point of view of patriotism than under that of religion. . . . His . . . essays are well thought and reasoned out; they are written in a free, flowing and popular style, and filled precisely with that sort of information most needed by our countrymen in the present crisis of our national life. They are not written solely or even primarily for theologians or even Catholics; they are addressed to the American people at large, whatever their religious or political preferences or tendencies.

"The Church, Culture and Liberty" is a vindication of the civilizing power of the Catholic Church. It is an arsenal of facts too often wilfully ignored by her enemies, often unknown to Catholics themselves. The volume, with which it is hoped another, culled from the pages of the original, may at some future time keep company in this Series, is a manly appeal to everything that is fine in the American character. It breathes no narrow sectionalism or nationalism. The author's spirit, to quote Brownson again, is free, lofty, firm, independent, yet "gentle, sweet, loving, through the charity of the Gospel, such as should be the spirit of every American." Praise from Sir Hubert indeed! It is admirably deserved. Every reader of the chapters from the *Miscellanea* here presented to the readers of "My BOOKCASE" SERIES will reecho the verdict.

But Martin John Spalding, eminent though he was as a writer, was greater still as bishop and a man. Called to the archiepiscopal see of Baltimore after the death of his friend, Francis Patrick Kenrick, he rose to his full height. Here he was teacher, shepherd, father, pioneer,

soldier, builder. It may be said that if Cardinal Gibbons, whom Archbishop Spalding consecrated Vicar Apostolic of North Carolina, won such love among his own children of Baltimore, it was because he walked in the footsteps of the noble-hearted Kentuckian. The interests of the Church of God were dear to the Archbishop. He loved Rome and the Papacy. At the Vatican Council he played a prominent part. Over the Second Plenary Council of Baltimore, October, 1866, he presided as the Pope's representative. He suggested the idea of the Catholic University. He loved the poor and organized in his Archdiocese the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. He looked abroad to the needs of others, and when the American College in Rome was in need of financial help, he generously supported it. He conceived the idea of the American College at Louvain, and through his efforts it was opened in 1857. He supported the press, called the Sisters of the Poor to Baltimore, and did not forget the spiritual and even temporal needs of the Negroes in his flock. As a Kentuckian he knew them thoroughly and was beloved by them. No one could help loving this great American, this gentle, sympathetic priest and pastor.

Archbishop Spalding was the embodiment of all that a great bishop should be. His faith was deep and sound, his piety gracious and tender, without a trace of austerity or rigor. He was a fearless yet cautious leader. His devotion to Our Lady was so childlike and so permeated his entire life, whether as a lad by the Rolling Fork, a student, priest or bishop, that when he died, February 7, 1872, in Baltimore, those who watched by his bedside, could well guess both from the words of the dying soldier of Christ and the heavenly smile that lit his countenance, that our Lady, as in the case of a younger hero, Stanislaus Kostka, had cheered with her sweet presence the last moments of her devoted servant.

The name of Martin John Spalding shall not perish from

the roll-call of America's great sons and great bishops. Others, says Orestes A. Brownson ("Works," vol. xiv, p. 511) may have been more learned theologians, as, for instance, his immediate predecessor in the see of Baltimore; others may have been deeper and more original thinkers; others still may have been equally successful as pastors . . . but we know none that excelled him in singleness of purpose, in devotion to Catholic interests, and intense zeal and activity in the cause to which his life was consecrated and devoted without reserve.

JOHN C. REVILLE, S. J.
Editor-in-chief.

THE CHURCH, CULTURE AND LIBERTY

CHAPTER I

THE INTOLERANT SPIRIT OF THE TIMES *

AN INTOLERANT SPIRIT INVOKED AGAINST CATHOLICS

THAT a fierce spirit of intolerance has been lately evoked in this once free country, no candid observer of passing events will deny. Christians of a particular denomination have been selected, as its first victims; but no one who has studied human nature, as it is developed in the facts of history, will for a moment suppose, that the ruin of Catholics in this country will satisfy the cravings of this fierce Moloch of religious bigotry. As with the tiger, the taste of blood will but sharpen its appetite for new victims. So it has been in the past; so it will be in the future

BIGOTRY AN IMPLACABLE MONSTER

Let no one deceive himself, nor suffer himself to be deceived, in a matter of so vital an importance to all who are sheltered under the glorious flag of our Union. Once the barriers, which our noble Con-

* See Editor's note on page 69.

stitution throws around the civil and religious liberties of all citizens alike, are broken down, no matter under what pretext of excitement, of political expediency, or necessity, there is no telling where the spirit of innovation will stop, or where the evils consequent upon it will be arrested. When a torrent has once broken through the embankment along its margin, it spreads devastation through the entire country; and the husbandman who has neglected the necessary precautions, while it was yet time, finds out, when it is too late for remedy, that all the fruits of his patient toil have been swept away or destroyed by the raging waters. So it will be precisely, should the checks and balances, which the wisdom and forecast of our fathers have inserted in the Constitution, be neglected or set at naught. The torrent of human passions, once it has overleaped this barrier, will overwhelm our beautiful country with ruins. All our dearly bought liberties will be virtually destroyed; property will be no longer secure; law and order will give place to passion and mob violence; the dearest of all human rights and privileges—that of worshiping God according to the dictates of our conscience—will be annihilated; the beautiful earthly paradise of our happy Republic will be changed into a frowning wilderness, filled with horror and desolation: finally, anarchy will take the place of order and good government. The worst possible species of tyranny is that of the mob. Far better be oppressed by one tyrant, than be crushed and torn by a thousand: far better have even a Nero or a Diocletian to lord it over you, than be ruled by that hydra-headed monster,

called a *mob*. The solitary tyrant may have some misgivings, or retain some remnant of justice or humanity; he may at least be checked by a sense of personal responsibility, and may tremble on his throne at the fear of popular retribution: the many-headed despot has neither reason, nor justice, nor humanity, nor conscience, nor fear of God or man, to restrain him from deeds of violence.

THE DANGER OF FOSTERING THE MOB SPIRIT

For the truth of this picture, we appeal with confidence to all history, from the period when an excited mob cried out against the Blessed Jesus at the tribunal of Pilate: Crucify Him! crucify Him!! down to the other day, when another mob, composed of persons calling themselves *Christians*, raised fiendish shouts of triumph at the tearing down and trampling under foot of the Cross, which had ornamented the spire of a Catholic church in Chelsea! At every time and in every place, the mob has always been the same ruthless, savage, untameable monster; the Christian scarcely less so than the pagan.

FEATURES IN THE PRESENT ANTI-CATHOLIC CRUSADE

Unhappily, we need not go far back into times past, nor travel far from home, to witness the sad effects of mob violence. A distinctive feature in the present crusade against Catholics in this country, is precisely the invoking against them of this ruthless spirit. Five or six of our churches either burnt, or sacked, or blown up by gunpowder—most of them

while our citizens were engaged in the joyous celebration of the liberty-hallowed Fourth of July—street brawlers, generally men of the lowest and most infamous character, hired to vilify and slander us and all that we hold most dear and sacred, in the public streets and highways, thereby openly exciting the passions of the ignorant to bloody civil feuds; our people, after having been thus grievously wronged in their character as citizens and as religionists, butchered in brutal street encounters, or assassinated in detail,¹ and then almost invariably placed in the wrong by a mendacious press and telegraph, in the interest of their enemies; and the victims of all these cruel and accumulated wrongs generally receiving, instead of sympathy, but additional obloquy and persecution, they being in almost every instance the only ones arrested and punished for the riots which others had caused, while the murderers and assassins and church burners escape: these are some of the practical workings of that truculent spirit, which, during the present year, has been aroused against us in this *free* country!

CRUEL TREATMENT OF A CATHOLIC PRIEST

Every one knows how a Catholic priest—the Rev. Mr. Bapst—was lately treated by a savage mob at Ellsworth in Maine. He was universally conceded to be a man of great zeal and benevolence, as well as of irreproachable life. The only crime alleged against him, was that he had dared express an opin-

¹ Witness the assassination of poor McCarthy at Newark; and other murders mentioned in the public prints.

ion on the Common School System, different from that of the majority. For this, in pursuance of a resolution passed at a town meeting, he was tarred and feathered, ridden on a rail, and treated with indignities, which forcibly remind us of the scenes on Calvary; indignities of which *savages* should have been ashamed. The ruffians, amidst these horrible outrages to God's minister, did not, however, forget to rifle his pockets and to appropriate to themselves his watch and money!² Says the Bangor *Journal*—a secular print of the vicinity:

While the tarring and feathering was going on, he was mocked and reviled with horrid blasphemies and indecencies. He was asked why he came over to this country. "To preach the Catholic doctrine," he replied. "We are Protestants," the ruffians said, "and will teach you better than that." One, mocking him, said scornfully: "So they persecuted Jesus of old." Another, reviling, asked: "Will the Virgin Mary save you?" These blasphemies remind one of the mockings on Calvary. Some asked him how many wives he had, how many children, and so on. These are the most decent of the insults, and are all that admit of publication.

Do we live in the nineteenth century, or have we been transported back to the period of civil commotions in the Middle Ages; when modern society was struggling into form, when feudal strife filled Europe with bloody intestine feuds, and when Guelph and Ghibelline caused the streets of Florence and Milan to run in blood? Do we live in a land of liberty and law, or in one of tyranny and anarchy? Has our noble Constitution—the master work of human wisdom—become a dead letter; or what is worse, have its just and equitable provisions, secur-

² Something more than fifty dollars.

ing equal civil and religious freedom to all, been openly contemned and trampled under foot? Have our people forgotten the price of liberty, that they now hold it so cheap? What will the friends of monarchy and the enemies of republicanism in the old world think and say, as they point in triumph to these sad commentaries, which we have written with our own hands, on our boasted fundamental principle of equal law and equal privileges to all? What will the radical republicans of Europe, with whom so many of our people profess to sympathize, answer, when their opponents will appeal to such practical workings of liberty as the above, in the great Model Republic across the Atlantic? Can any reasonable man doubt, that the excesses to which we allude will have the effect of greatly weakening, if not of wholly marring the cause of true and rational liberty throughout the world?

If history utters any warning, or teaches any lesson, it is this great truth: that persecution has never yet put down a good cause, nor materially served a bad one. Truth may be obscured or smothered for a time; it cannot be destroyed. Thus the sun may be darkened for a time by the interposing cloud, but anon his bright rays will break out again to illumine the world; no human power can wholly extinguish his light, much less blot him out from the heavens. Yet the sun will share the fate of all things created, and cease to exist; but the truth of God abideth forever. For more than eighteen centuries the Catholic Church has stood, a tower of strength, amidst the ruins of all things earthly, strewn in her pathway. Dynasties have changed, thrones have

fallen, and sceptres have been broken around her; yet has she stood, and she still stands, stronger than ever:

She saw the commencement of all the governments and of all the ecclesiastical establishments, that now exist in the world; and we feel no assurance that she is not destined to see the end of them all. . . . Four times since the Church of Rome was established in western Christendom has the human intellect risen up against her yoke. Twice she remained completely victorious. Twice she came forth from the conflict bearing the marks of cruel wounds, but with the principle of life still strong within her. When we reflect upon the tremendous assaults which she has survived, we find it difficult to conceive in what way she is to perish.³

OUR ADVERSARIES VIRTUALLY YIELDING US THE VICTORY IN FAIR ARGUMENT

Nothing could, in fact, be more honorable to the Catholic Church than the mode of warfare which has been lately adopted to effect her ruin in this country. In appealing to passion and mob violence against her, her enemies virtually acknowledge that calm examination and sober reasoning are powerless for her destruction; by the necessity under which they find themselves to resort to misrepresentation and slander, they substantially concede that they would be worsted in the fair field of truthful statement and dispassionate argument. Thus, those Protestants who have been induced by prejudice and passion to favor this unhallowed mode of attack upon our Church, have really abandoned the vantage-ground in the controversy, and have thereby unwittingly yielded us the victory. Bad temper, unfair-

³ Macaulay—Review of Ranke's "History of the Popes."

ness, and violence in a disputant, greatly damage his cause, in the judgment of all calm and impartial men; while the party assailed by such weapons is always sure to win sympathy, and to gain on public opinion.

THEIR NUMEROUS INCONSISTENCIES

Another feature in the present violent warfare against us, is its glaring inconsistency. The men who are most prominent in the crusade are, in general, as unprincipled as the means they employ are detestable.⁴ Professing to be the champions of freedom, their secret and even avowed object is to rob of freedom a large portion of their fellow citizens: for their "war to the hilt against Romanism," as explained by their words and their *actions*, means nothing less than this. Professing to love the Bible, and boasting a wish to see the principles of the Bible triumphantly carried out in politics, they trample recklessly upon the most cherished principles of the Bible. The Bible says: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself"; they say: "We must hate our neighbor, and declare war to the hilt against him, if he happen to belong to the oldest and most numerous body of Christians on the face of the earth." The Bible teaches, that we must love our enemies; they hate even their friends, or those at least who

⁴ We speak here and throughout this Chapter chiefly of the leaders in the anti-Catholic warfare. We are convinced that very many among those who have enrolled themselves in the new political party are well meaning men, who have been misled by the arts of others, or who are even persuaded that they are doing God and their country service by proscribing Catholics!

have never wronged them in thought or deed. The Bible inculcates the equitable principle, that we must do unto others, as we would wish others to do unto us under like circumstances; they teach that Catholics are to be excluded from the operation of this Gospel rule. The Bible teaches, that we are to be kind and indulgent to the poor stranger who comes within our borders; they teach that no treatment is too hard for the stranger, if he dare think for himself in matters of religion, and exercise his undoubted civil rights—clearly guaranteed to him by the Constitution in the country of his adoption. These specifications will suffice to show, how our boasted lovers and champions of the Bible—who are wont to parade the sacred volume in their riotous and bloody processions⁵—wantonly trample it under foot, whenever its declarations conflict with their headlong passions.

THE NEWARK OUTRAGE

Another glaring inconsistency in those who are foremost in the anti-Catholic crusade, is found in the fact, that while they profess to advocate a change of policy in regard to all foreigners who come to our shores, they secretly, and sometimes even openly, fraternize with the blood-stained Irish Orangemen and the truculent German infidels! Their boasted political principles are thus lost sight of, or openly violated, whenever there is a good opportunity for waging a “war to the hilt against Romanism.” Every one is familiar with the late atrocious attack

⁵ As they did during the Philadelphia riots.

on the Catholic Church at Newark by Irish Orange-men, and how the press in the interest of the Know-Nothings, as usual, added slander to outrage, by laying all the blame on the Irish Catholics. Well, sacrilege was perpetrated in the open light of day; murder was done on the person of an inoffensive man: yet up to the present day not one among the foreign Protestant perpetrators of these horrid deeds has been even arrested! Still the truth came out, after the first storm of passion had passed away; and even the *New York Tribune*, reechoing the declaration of other papers, at length honorably proclaimed it as follows:

THE NEWARK MURDER AND SACRILEGE.—That Church stands fairly exculpated from all offense, and its devastation is an unprovoked and shameful outrage, which reflects great discredit on Newark and belligerent Protestantism. And it is worthy of note that while this is the fifth or sixth Catholic edifice, which has been destroyed or devastated by mob violence in our country, *there is no instance on record wherein a Protestant house of worship has been ravaged by Catholics.*⁶

THE “MANLINESS” OF THE AMERICAN CHARACTER

As if conscious of the dishonorable character of their warfare on Catholics, the new anti-Catholic party enters the field shrouded in secrecy and wrapped up in mystery. Professing to be the champions of “American principles,” they skulk away into darkness, and seem ashamed to show their faces in the light of day. If this be one of the “American principles,” then are we done forever with American principles! Born and reared up in this free country,

⁶ *New York Tribune*, of September 8, 1854.

we have doted from our infancy on the glorious principles embodied in our noble Declaration of Independence, and in those cognate ones set forth in our matchless Constitution. They have been the dream of our youth, and the idol of our maturer years. And we have had abundant opportunities to know, that those whom *choice*, and not the mere *accident* of birth, have made citizens of our happy country, have, without an exception known to us, entertained a fond predilection for American principles, scarcely surpassed in intensity by our own. But we and they had thought, in our simplicity, that *manliness* was one among those cherished "American principles": that it was even an essential part of the American character to be open, candid, and straightforward in all its acts; that the American could have no possible cause to be ashamed either of his name, of his political doctrines, or of his acts; that he needed no cover of darkness to conceal either his purposes or his deeds. But we are mistaken; our dream has been dissipated; and we awake to the painful reality, that neither we nor our fathers knew anything about "American principles," until we were happily taught them by foreign infidels, incendiaries, and assassins, boasting the hallowed name of patriots and martyrs of liberty! Yet these were the very men against whose pernicious arts Washington had so solemnly warned us, when he bade us beware of foreign influence!

WHENCE DANGER TO THE REPUBLIC IS TO BE
APPREHENDED

The real danger to our republican institutions lies in the encouragement given to those mischievous men—the spawn of foreign revolutions—whom failure in their attempts abroad cause to be cast upon our shores. Received with open arms by our patriotic sympathy, they proceed forthwith to organize amongst us those dangerous secret political societies, which were the chief instruments of their warfare in Europe. Hear what the venerable Josiah Quincy says of such societies:

THE BATS AND THE EAGLES

The liberties of a people are never more certainly in the path of destruction than when they trust themselves to the guidance of secret societies. Birds of the night are never birds of wisdom. One of them indeed received this name, but it was from its *looks*, and not from its moral and intellectual qualities. They are for the most part birds of prey. The fate of a republic is sealed when the Bats take the lead of the Eagles.

Every reader of 'American history knows how Washington saved the country, by refusing to recognize Genet, the envoy of the bloody French Republic; whose arts and influence among the people had well-nigh brought ruin on our infant government. The calm judgment and wise forecast of Washington prevented us from being led away by this most dangerous "foreign influence"; leading to precisely such "entangling alliances," as the demagogue Kossuth, at a more recent period, sought, happily in vain, to bring about.

But enough on this branch of the subject. We cannot bring ourselves to believe, for a moment, that the narrow-minded, inconsistent, un-Scriptural, un-American, and utterly detestable spirit, exhibited by those among us who now take a leading part in the warfare against Catholics, is at all likely to become the settled policy of our yet happy and prosperous country. Should we, however, be wrong in this belief, and should that truculent spirit prevail for a time over sounder and more American principles; should the persecution of Catholics continue and increase until our churches will all be in ruins, and there will remain no resting place for our feet on the soil of this Republic; then are we convinced, that amidst the ruins of our Church in this country will be strewn likewise the ruins of the Republic itself! The liberal and enlarged principles of the latter will be annihilated; its greatness will be arrested and its glories dimmed; and while the stars of its flag may yet float in the heavens, its *E Pluribus Unum* will be obliterated, and its many-colored stripes emblematic of union in diversity—like its motto—will be blotted out forever.⁷

HOPING FOR BETTER THINGS

Still we are unshaken in our hope of better things in the future. There is, after all, a strongly conservative spirit and a practical good sense in the mass of our population, which needs only be fairly

⁷ Or, if not wholly obliterated, at least severed from the unity of the Flag: the stars being for the native born, and the stripes for the foreigner, escaping from tyranny to this noble asylum of freedom! This is the beautiful thought of Archbishop Hughes.

awakened, to frown down all attempts at fastening on our necks the system of narrow-minded and prescriptive policy of which we are speaking. To this practical sense and “sober second thought” alone do we now address ourselves; all reasoning with the unscrupulous faction which seeks to abridge or destroy our liberties, were worse than useless. We will accordingly devote the remaining portion of this chapter to answering some principal objections made against us by our more reasonable opponents. Fully to refute them all, would require a volume; though the bulk of the charges might be answered, by simply saying that we are misrepresented. We will confine ourselves to those which affect our character as citizens: and even here, we must be brief, though we hope that what we shall be able to say will be plain, straightforward, and to the purpose. Truth needs no gloss nor drapery; when presented in its simple and unadorned beauty, it best attracts the admiration, and wins the homage of all its candid and impartial votaries.

THE ACCUSATIONS AGAINST US: IS THE CATHOLIC CHURCH INTOLERANT? OR UNCHARITABLE?

Almost all the accusations made against us are reducible to these two heads: first, that in religion we are intolerant and prescriptive; second, that in politics, we are enemies of republican institutions, and friends of a foreign despotism. We will proceed summarily to answer these two charges, together with some of the principal specifications alleged to support them.

LATITUDINARIANISM, NOT CHARITY

I. In regard to the charge of exclusiveness and intolerance, two things, which are often confounded, should be accurately distinguished; namely, *theological* exclusiveness and *civil* intolerance. Our Protestant brethren have, in general, very vague and loose ideas upon this subject. Among them, the term *religious liberality* generally implies what might with more propriety be called *latitudinarianism*. The fashionable theory, which now obtains extensively among those outside of the Catholic Church, holds that it matters not what a Christian believes, provided he try to be a moral man and a good citizen; in other words, that Christ either taught no specific doctrines whatever, or that He required, as a condition of salvation, belief in none which He did teach, or at most in but a few fundamental articles. When those, who maintain the obligation of belief in these fundamental principles only, are called upon to define them, they are often embarrassed for an answer; some giving a wider, some a more limited range to the points in question. All, however, agree in advocating, to a greater or less extent, the latitudinarian principle above indicated.

Now we Catholics strongly protest against this popular theory, as tending to unsettle all faith, and to subvert Christianity itself. We hold that Christ delivered a definite system of religion; that *all* the doctrines which He taught are equally true, and equally to be believed; that He died on the cross to seal the truth of them all with His blood; and that consequently all the articles of faith which He estab-

lished, in a manner so solemn, must be believed by all who have the means of knowing them. In other words, we hold that Christ, being the Son of God and Truth itself, did establish and in the very nature of things, could have established, but *one religion*; and that, as He founded it for the salvation of mankind, He must have required that it should be embraced, in all its parts, by all who would be saved. This principle we regard as almost self-evident; and we cannot see how it can be denied by any, who have definite ideas on the nature and purpose of the Christian religion, or who believe in the Divinity of its Author and Founder. If the Christian religion was not, after all, necessary to salvation, then why did the Son of God undergo so much labor, and endure so much obloquy and suffering for its establishment? Why did He say, speaking of all the doctrines which He had taught without any distinction: “He that believeth not, shall be condemned”? ⁸ Why does His inspired Apostle Paul declare, in the name of his Master: “Without faith it is impossible to please God!” ⁹

But our present purpose does not require us to discuss this or any other doctrinal point; we are merely stating our belief. What then do we hold in regard to those who are outside of the one true Church of Christ? Do we condemn them all alike and indiscriminately? We do not. We leave them to their own responsibility before God, by whose unerring judgment they will, like ourselves, stand or fall. If not united with the Church, *through their*

⁸ Mark xvi.

⁹ Hebrews xi.

own fault—having the light and opportunity to find out what it is, and neglecting to correspond therewith—they are in imminent danger of losing their immortal souls, for which Jesus died. If they are separated from it, *without any fault of theirs*—should there be any such—they will not be condemned *for this*; for God condemns none but the guilty. Whether they are out of the true Church with or without their own fault, the great Searcher of hearts alone can decide; and in His hands we leave them.

But the Catholic Church teaches farther, with Christ Himself, that we must “love our neighbor as ourselves”; that we must bear the burdens of one another; that we must pray for and love even our enemies, and do good to those who do evil to us; that, when it is question of solacing misery or succoring distress, we must not stop to inquire the belief of the sufferer: in a word, that without charity towards *all* mankind, the profession of Christianity were vain and profitless. The Catholic Church enjoins upon her children to be just in all their dealings, to be good citizens, to be good neighbors, to be good parents, good children, good husbands, good wives—good in every relation of society; but especially, to be good Christians, loving God above all things, and performing all their actions for His honor and glory.

If these principles be intolerant, then must we plead guilty to the charge. But if they be such as are essentially connected with Christianity itself, such as alone are true and consistent with the whole tenor and the very end and aim of the Christian

religion; then are we content to bear whatever of obloquy may attach to our belief in them. If, to be considered charitable, we are called upon to sacrifice truth and common sense itself, and to say that a hundred contradictory systems of belief may all be equally true, then must we submit to the imputation of uncharitableness. In this we do but imitate St. Paul, who sought not to please men, but rather to be the servant of Christ¹⁰; and we do but share in the ignominy of Christ Himself, who, instead of flattering human error, died for the truth.

PRINCIPLES OF THE CHURCH IN REGARD TO PERSECUTION

But does the Catholic Church “call down fire from heaven” on the heads of those who dissent from her belief? By no means: hers has been at all times a different spirit altogether, and one more consonant with that of her Divine Founder. Her mission has been to win sinners to repentance, to inculcate mercy and love, not hatred and bitterness. The first laws for the punishment of heretics were enacted by the early Christian emperors, not by the Popes, the bishops, or the Church. The latter deprecated all rigor against the sectaries, unless in particular cases, where it seemed indispensable to restrain violence, or to redress open and glaring outrages against religious liberty.¹¹ The Catholic bishops and the Popes were themselves often the victims of imperial

¹⁰ “Do I seek to please men! If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ” (Gal. i. 10).

¹¹ See the evidence on this subject, presented in considerable detail by Archbishop Kenrick, in his work on “The Primacy”; Part ii, chap. viii.

claims to regulate the affairs of the Church; and it is very doubtful whether they could have prevented the enactment and execution of the laws in question. The Popes were always opposed to violent measures for the propagation of the Faith among pagans; and they were also in the habit of throwing the shield of their protection around the Jews, whenever their religious privileges and civil rights were infringed by intemperate Christian zeal.¹² The Church has thus always adopted and acted upon the maxim of Tertullian, who, more than sixteen centuries ago, claimed religious liberty for Christians as an indefeasible right, growing out of the very nature of religion itself: "*Religionis non est religionem cogere*—It is not the part of religion to establish religion by force."¹³ Her spirit of mildness was breathed forth by the great St. Augustine, when, writing to Donatus, the imperial Proconsul in Africa, he deprecated all undue severity against the Arians and Donatists, and said: "We desire them to be *corrected, not slain.*"¹⁴ As one of her greatest Popes, St. Leo the Great, says: "The lenity of the Church being content with the priestly sentence, shrinks from sanguinary vengeance";¹⁵ and she sanctions or tolerates severe measures emanating

¹² For many facts sustaining this assertion, see "The Primacy," *ibid.*

¹³ The whole passage of Tertullian, as translated by Archbishop Kenrick, is as follows: "It is man's right and privilege, that each one should worship what he thinks proper; nor can the religion of another injure or profit him. Neither is it a part of religion to compel its adoption; since this should be spontaneous, not forced, as even sacrifices are asked only of the cheerful giver." "The Primacy," *ibid.*

¹⁴ *Epist. Donato.*

¹⁵ *Epist. ad Turribium.*

from the princes of the earth, only when, without them, society itself would be endangered, "all regard for probity destroyed, all bonds of society dissolved, and Divine and human laws at once overturned."¹⁶ Hence that celebrated and well known maxim, embodied as an axiom in her Canon Law: "*Ecclesia abhorret a sanguine*—The Church abhors blood-shed." So far is this principle carried, that a standing rule of her discipline forbids the ordination, not only of those who have been guilty of shedding blood, but also of those who, whether as judges, accusers, or voluntary witnesses, have cooperated towards passing a sentence of death on a fellow-man, or even one of bodily mutilation without taking life.¹⁷ From the earliest period of her history, she has taught and ~~acted~~ upon these principles. To furnish one out of a hundred examples of this, it is well known that in the fourth century, St. Martin, the illustrious Bishop of Tours, openly censured two Spanish Bishops—Ithacius and Idacius—for teaching that the Priscillianists should be punished with corporal chastisement or death for their wicked heresy, though this tended to the subversion of social order itself; and the Church sustained him in his truly Christian course.¹⁸

¹⁶ *Ibid.* He refers to the fatal errors of the ancient Manicheans.

¹⁷ See our Canonists—*passim*.

¹⁸ The great St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, united with St. Martin in this charitable interposition in favor of the persecuted Priscillianists.

HAS SHE EVER PERSECUTED AS A CHURCH?

Persecution is not, and never has been a doctrine of the Catholic Church. Our standard writers have often boldly defied their adversaries to establish the contrary proposition; but their challenge has never been fairly met. Surely, if the Catholic Church had ever taught persecution, as a doctrine, her enemies could tell us when and where she inculcated the offensive tenet. If she ever persecuted, *as a Church*, they could certainly furnish us with such facts and specifications on the subject, as would not be susceptible of either explanation or reply. The Catholic Church is no secret society; she has taught boldly, and acted out her teaching openly in the arena of the world for more than eighteen centuries; and if the charge of persecution could be sustained against her, it would long since have been done. The attempt has indeed been made, but it has utterly failed. Our writers have scattered to the winds the arguments of their opponents on this subject, and have shown that, in the majority of cases, the latter have substituted vague declamation for *facts*, fiery appeals to passion for sober argument.

But have not Catholics persecuted in times past? We do not deny it; but we answer, that they did so in virtue of no doctrine of their Church. If the mere act of persecution proved the doctrine, then it would follow that all the Protestant sects hold the same odious tenet; for all of them have been stained with persecution, at one period or other of their history. They have all persecuted Catholics, whenever and wherever they had the power to do

so; and almost all of them have likewise been guilty of the glaring inconsistency of persecuting brother Protestants, for daring, in the exercise of the conceded right of private judgment, to think differently from themselves! But who would infer from this undoubted fact, that Protestants generally hold it as a *doctrine*, that all who dissent from their particular views should be put down by fire and sword? Such a conclusion would be clearly illogical and grievously unjust. Now we claim the application of the same equitable principle to the charge of persecution brought against our Church; and surely our claim is not unreasonable.

But the Catholic Church professes to be infallible and unchangeable, whereas the Protestant sects admit that they are liable to err, and have often erred in times past. We freely grant the latter proposition; in regard to the former, our adversaries lose sight of a very obvious distinction, which truth demands should be made. The Catholic Church is unchangeable in *doctrine*, but not in *discipline*. The latter may and does vary in its details, according to times, places, and circumstances. So that, even if our opponents should prove that our Church had, at any period of her history, adopted persecution as a line of conduct under particular circumstances, or as a general *discipline*, they would not still make good their position. But have they established even this proposition? We believe not; and to show how inconclusive are their arguments, on a point which does not directly touch the real matter at issue, we will briefly refer to a few of their specifications.

THIRD CANON OF LATERAN

They allege, with an air of triumph, the third canon of the fourth Council of Lateran,¹⁹ which excommunicated heretics, and ordered that they should be delivered up for punishment to the secular power. Our answer is obvious. In the first place, it is manifest that no *doctrine* is promulgated by this canon, but that only a rule of action is laid down for a particular case. 2. We may observe, that Matthew Paris, a weighty contemporary historian, denies that this and the other canons were the acts of the Council itself;²⁰ and that the English Protestant church historian, Collier, declares his belief that the third canon in particular is not genuine.²¹ 3. But, waiving this, and admitting the genuineness of the canon, every reader of Church History knows that it was enacted with the full concurrence, and probably on the positive demand, of the temporal sovereigns of Christendom, who were nearly all of them present at the Council, either personally, or by their ambassadors.²² Some of the provisions of the canon could not, in fact, have been enacted, much less, carried into execution, but with the consent and co-operation of the temporal sovereigns; especially of those who were chiefly concerned. It may here be remarked, in general, that many of the councils held

¹⁹ Held A. D. 1215.

²⁰ Matt. Paris—*ad annum 1215, apud Milner—“Letters to a Prebendary.”*

²¹ Collier, “Ecclesiastical History”; vol. i, p. 424: quoted *ibid.*

²² There were thus present at this Council the emperors of Germany and Constantinople, the kings of France, England, Aragon, Sicily, Hungary, Jerusalem, and Cyprus; besides several minor sovereigns.

during the Middle Ages were not exclusively ecclesiastical conventions, but rather congresses of all Christendom, representing the temporal as well as the spiritual power.²³ 4. The severe provisions of this canon were directed against the Albigenses, who then infested the South of France, than whom a more pestilent sect probably never existed. They were the sworn foes of all religion, of all decency, and of all social order. Wherever they appeared, desolation and ruin followed in their pathway.²⁴ They were the Jacobins and *Sans-culottes* of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; and they were, if possible, even more truculent and bloody than the Jacobins themselves. They were the enemies of both God and man. Worse than our modern Mormons, they condemned marriage altogether, and gave a free rein to every brutal passion and appetite. Had they succeeded in establishing their principles, all order and all civilization would have been at an end. Is it any wonder then, that all Christendom—the State no less than the Church—rose up in mass to put down, even by force, a sect so monstrous? Is it not plain also, that, such being the facts, the severe measures sanctioned by the Council constitute an exceptional case, which should not be alleged as evidence of a general rule? And for the truth of this picture, we appeal with confidence to all contempo-

²³ As during the period in question, society was struggling into form, and there were no standing armies to repel strongly organized and widespread aggressions upon social order, expeditions of a general character for the defense of society were decided on in councils of the European sovereigns; and when the enemies of order were likewise the foes of religion, these expeditions were called crusades.

²⁴ For facts and details on this subject, we beg to refer to "The Primacy," by Archbishop Kenrick, *sup. cit.*

rary history. We may safely apply to them what the learned Protestant church historian Mosheim candidly says of a cognate sect—the Brethren of the Free Spirit:²⁵

Certain writers, who have accustomed themselves to entertain a high idea of the sanctity of all those who, in the Middle Ages, separated themselves from the Church of Rome, suspect the inquisitors of having falsely attributed impious doctrines to the Brethren of the Free Spirit. But this suspicion is entirely *groundless*. . . . Their shocking violation of decency was a consequence of their pernicious system. They looked upon decency and modesty as marks of inward corruption. . . . Certain enthusiasts amongst them maintained, that the believer could not sin, let his conduct be ever so horrible or atrocious.²⁶

THE INQUISITION—JOHN HUSS

But what have we to say on the Inquisition, especially the Spanish Inquisition; which, with the alleged sanction of the Church, filled Christendom with so many horrors for ages? What explanation are we to give of what occurred at the Council of Constance, which, contrary to plighted faith, consigned John Huss and Jerome of Prague to the flames? Satisfactory answers on both these points could be easily given; and they have been given a hundred times already. But as we devote special chapters to these subjects in another volume, we

²⁵ During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries a great part of Europe was infested with pernicious sects, which revived under different forms the anti-social errors of the ancient Manicheans. They were all alike, though they bore the different names of Turlupins, Begards, Brethren of the Free Spirit, and Albigenses. The Petro-Brusians were a kindred sect.

²⁶ "Eccles. History," vol. iii, p. 284; Maclain's translation—quoted by Milner.

must refer the candid reader to it for details; and we do so with entire confidence, that all who will take the trouble to read these papers, will rise from the perusal with the conviction, that even those darker passages in the Church's history do not make out the case of persecution against her, even as a point of discipline.

CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT PERSECUTION SINCE THE REFORMATION

Come we now to times nearer our own day. What are the statistics of persecution during the last three centuries, since the dawn of what has been called by its friends the *Reformation*? And how stands the case at present in Europe, and *in America*? No candid man who has read history aright will deny, that during this period, and especially at present, we have been, and are now, much more sinned against than sinning in the matter of persecution. Catholics who speak the English language, in particular, have been for three hundred years, almost without intermission, the victims of the most ruthless intolerance. Robbed of their Church and often of their personal property; slandered in their reputation; hunted down by the myrmidons of a persecuting government; branded as traitors and outlaws in their own country and that of their fathers before them: such has been their treatment in Protestant England up to a comparatively recent period; ever since the fatal day when the tyrant Henry VIII—the Nero of modern times—quarreled with the Pope, and violently severed the unity of the Church, be-

cause she could not and would not sanction his headlong passions, to the injury of a virtuous wife! In Ireland, the fate of the Catholics was still harder, and of longer continuance.

We go even farther, and state, as a fact which no one will deny, who retains the least regard for historic truth, that in every country in Europe where the Reformation succeeded, Catholics were invariably persecuted, almost as atrociously and for nearly as long a time, as in England and Ireland. Robbery, sacrilege, slander, civil commotions and bloodshed, were everywhere the arms with which incipient Protestantism assailed those, whose only crime was their honest wish to adhere to the Faith, and worship at the altars of their forefathers, and of the forefathers of those very men too who were engaged in persecuting them! Perhaps in Switzerland, an old Catholic Republic with some remains of the ancient Catholic freedom, the persecuting spirit was less rampant than elsewhere; but even in Switzerland, with its glowing Catholic memories of William Tell, Fürst, and Melchtal, we find no exception to the remark just made. Even there the fiercely intolerant spirit of the early reformers was not softened.

We conclude this branch of the subject with an extract from the *Edinburgh Review*—an unexceptionable Protestant authority—which candidly places in its true light the character of the self-styled reformers, in the matter of persecution:

Protestant writers, in general, are apt to describe the Reformation as a struggle for religious freedom. . . . Now, we humbly apprehend, that the free exercise of private judgment was most

heartily abhorred by the first reformers, except only where the persons who assumed it had the good fortune to be exactly of their opinion. . . . The martyrdoms of Servetus, in Geneva, and of Joan Bocher, in England, are notable instances of the religious freedom which prevailed in the pure and primitive state of the Protestant Churches. It is obvious, also, that the freedom for which our first reformers so strenuously contended, did not, by any means, include a freedom to think as the Catholics thought; that is to say, to think as all Europe had thought for many ages, and as the greatest part of Europe thought at the very time and continue to think to this very day. *The complete extirpation of the Catholic Church, not merely as a public establishment, but as a tolerated sect, was the avowed object of our first reformers.* In 1560, by an act of the Parliament, which established the Reformation in Scotland, both the sayers and hearers of Mass, whether in public or in private, were, for the first offense, to suffer confiscation of all their goods, together with corporal punishment, at the discretion of the magistrate; they were to be punished by banishment for the second offense; and *by death for the third!* . . . It was not possible for the most bigoted Catholic to inculcate more distinctly the complete extirpation of the opinions and worship of the Protestants, than John Knox inculcated as a most sacred duty, incumbent on the civil government in the first instance, and if the civil government is remiss, incumbent on the people, to extirpate completely the opinions and worship of the Catholics, and even to massacre the Catholics, man, woman, and child. . . . If the government had followed the directions of the clergy, the Catholics would have been extirpated by the sword. . . . In the reigns of Charles the Second, and of his brother, a Protestant prelacy, in alliance with a Protestant administration, outstript the wishes of those arbitrary monarchs in the persecution of their Protestant countrymen. It is needless to weary ourselves or our readers with disgusting details, which the curious in martyrology may find in various publications. Everybody knows that the martyrdoms were both numerous and cruel, but perhaps the comparative mildness of the *Catholic Church of Scotland*, is not so generally known. Knox has investigated the matter with commendable diligence, but has not been able to muster more than eighteen martyrs who perished by the hand of the executioner, from the year 1500, when heresy first began, till 1559, when the Catholics had no longer the power to persecute. . . . It is, indeed, a horrid list; but far short of the numbers, who, during the twenty-two years immediately previous to the Revolution, were

capitally executed in Scotland for the “*wicked error*” of separation from the worship of the Protestant Episcopal Church.²⁷

While we heartily unite with every lover of freedom in condemning all acts of persecution for conscience sake which have ever been perpetrated, no matter what the alleged motive or pretext, candor will compel even our adversaries to acknowledge, that in the persecution of Catholics by Protestants, there were aggravating circumstances, which were not found in the persecution of the latter by the former. Protestant persecution was purely aggressive; Catholic persecution was mainly defensive: the former sought to rob Catholics of all they held most dear; the latter was directed chiefly towards maintaining the most undoubted and most sacred rights. Catholics were in possession; Protestants aimed at violently ousting them from their firesides and their altars, and taking their place. Catholics sought to preserve the ancient Faith and worship, hallowed and rendered dear by a thousand glorious memories; Protestants sought to substitute for it, frequently by violence, new doctrines and new forms, about which they were not themselves agreed, and which they claimed the right of changing as often as they might judge proper.

Waiving all this, however, let us strike evenly the balance of persecution in the past; burying whatever is unpleasant in generous oblivion, and forgiving as we hope to be forgiven. Now, how stands the account of religious persecution at the present day? Is all the intolerance on the side of Catholics?

²⁷ *Edinburgh Review*, Article VIII, entitled “*Toleration of the Reformers*,” No. 53.

Or have not Protestants at least their own full share of the guilt, which they are so free to charge exclusively on others? Let us see.

PARALLEL BETWEEN CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT COUNTRIES IN THE MATTER OF PERSECUTION

The impartial comparison between Catholic and Protestant countries, on the subject of persecution in late years, exhibits a fearful balance against the latter. It may be stated without exaggeration, that there is scarcely a Protestant country on the face of the earth, which does not, even at this enlightened day, persecute Catholics, in one form or another, or which has not persecuted them during the present century; while there is, on the contrary, scarcely a Catholic nation in the world, which does persecute, or has recently persecuted Protestants. Strange as this may sound in the ears of those who have been misled into the persuasion, that the Catholic is essentially a persecuting Church, and that we owe religious freedom entirely to Protestantism, it is nevertheless true. Here are the facts; and first on the Catholic side.

France is Catholic, and France not only grants the fullest liberty of worship to her small number of Protestant citizens, but she even pays their ministers out of the public treasury. Austria is Catholic; and Austria, despotic though she be usually represented, concedes a full measure of religious liberty to the Protestant minority, allowing them even to have their own separate schools, supported, like those of the Catholic majority, from the common

fund.²⁸ Bavaria is Catholic, and Bavaria also allows equal civil and religious privileges to her Protestant subjects. Belgium is Catholic, and Belgium has a fundamental law, granting unrestricted and equal religious freedom to all. Italy, Spain, and Portugal, with perhaps some of the colonies of the two last, may be thought to form exceptions to this general rule; but though their policy be somewhat proscriptive on the score of religion, we read of no acts of persecution, worthy the name, having been recently perpetrated therein. In the first place, they evidently could not have been guilty of persecuting their Protestant citizens, for the very simple reason that they have no Protestant citizens. If they are jealous, especially of English Protestants, who sometimes pass through those countries, distributing tracts and Bibles, it has generally happened, because England has rendered herself justly odious on the continent of Europe by her constant political intrigues among her neighbors, often carried on under the guise of religious zeal; and because her tract distributers are suspected, frequently with too much reason, of being political propagandists, and secret agents paid for their services.

The intrigues of Lord Minto in Italy, and those of Bulwer and others in Spain, are too well known to require proof. One of the principal means employed by the hired agents of these men for strengthening English influence, was the distribution of Bibles and tracts, and the accompanying efforts to make proselytes among the Catholic inhabitants. The intrigue, however, was unsuccessful; Bulwer

²⁸ The authority for this statement will be given a little farther on.

was compelled to leave Spain, and Minto is now detested in Italy as never was man detested before. The affair of the Madiai, about which so great an outcry was lately made, may be easily explained in this way. Their imprisonment was the result of their active attempts at proselytism, as *paid* emissaries of England; not of their wish to profess and practice religious principles opposed to those of the Catholic majority. It is a notorious fact, that in both Italy and Spain, Protestant travelers or temporary residents are never molested on account of peculiarities in their religious creed or worship; provided they, on their side, do not interfere with the faith and worship of the Catholic population. The Anglican Church and our American Protestants have places of worship at Rome itself, under the eyes and with the permission of the Pope, who not only allows them to assemble therein for religious purposes as often as they wish, but protects them in the enjoyment of their religious freedom. Protestants have similar religious privileges in Tuscany, and elsewhere in Italy. At Rome, at Florence, at Leghorn, and in other places, they have also their separate cemeteries. If this latter privilege has not as yet been granted to Protestant strangers sojourning in Spain, we have little doubt that it will soon be conceded; whenever, in fact, it will be demanded in a proper manner, by a sufficient number of Protestants to render a separate burial place an object of importance or necessity. The only complaint which the very few non-Catholics passing through, or residing for a time in Spain, can now make on this subject is, that in case of death they are not

buried in ground expressly set apart and blessed for Catholic interment, or with the solemnities which usually accompany the Catholic funeral—privileges which they would scarcely covet, even in this free country. Those who make so much noise about Spanish intolerance in the matter of Protestant funerals, wholly lose sight of, or purposely conceal the fact, that in Protestant England—where there are a thousand resident Catholic *citizens* for every Protestant *stranger* in Spain—Catholics are not allowed to be buried, with any pomp or ceremonial, in the public cemeteries; though these are, in many instances, old Catholic burial grounds, wrested by violence from their original Catholic purpose by the English Protestant government! The Catholics of England have thus much more reason to complain on this subject, than have the very few Protestants who may happen to be for a time in Spain.

Let us now take a rapid glance at the Protestant nations of Europe. In all of them, without an exception known to us, there is an established religion, with a union of Church and State. In the freest amongst them all—England—Catholics are barely tolerated; they are continually loaded with obloquy and abuse, and are frequently made the victims of petty legal enactments. Witness the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill; the late savage outbreak of indignation at the reestablishment of the Catholic hierarchy; the bitter prosecution of Dr. Newman; and the monster grievance of all—the bloated Church Establishment—fattened on the sweat and blood of the crushed and down-trodden masses of the people. Protestant Hol-

land recently persecuted her Catholic subjects to such an extent as to drive them into a rebellion, the result of which was the independence of Catholic Belgium. Protestant Prussia lately imprisoned the venerable Archbishop of Cologne, to compel him to sacrifice his conscientious convictions; and Protestant Baden is now actively engaged in a similar disgraceful persecution of the venerable Archbishop Vicari, of Freiburg, and of his clergy, for the same unhallowed motive. But the Archbishop of Freiburg is destined to triumph over the intolerant Protestant government of the Grand Duke, as he of Cologne triumphed over the persecuting Prussian monarch.²⁹ In Protestant Sweden, he who dares become a Catholic is banished the country, and his property is confiscated to the State; and we believe a similar law exists in Protestant Denmark. In Sweden, but a few years ago, the distinguished painter Nilsen suffered the full penalty of this iniquitous law; and more recently still several ladies, distinguished for their piety, have had the same severe sentence passed on them. Heartless must be the persecutor, who does not spare even the weakness of woman! Finally, every one knows how fiercely the Swiss Protestants raged against the Catholics, when the latter were overpowered by superior numbers in the late civil war, brought about itself by the most reckless Protestant intolerance; how the holy Bishop of Lausanne and Geneva was banished from his country; how the Jesuits were

²⁹ What aggravates the hardship of the persecution in regard to both these distinguished Catholic prelates, is the circumstance, that both were octogenarians of irreproachable character, whose age and virtues should have protected them from such outrages.

expelled, and the poor defenseless nuns were driven from their convents; how Church property was confiscated, including even that of the benevolent monks of Mount St. Bernard, who had saved so many valuable Protestant lives amidst the snows of the Alps; and how an iron yoke was there placed on the necks of the down-trodden Catholic minority.

If there be a Protestant country in the world, which has not even recently persecuted Catholics, we have not yet learned its name; and it ill becomes our opponents to charge *all* the persecution on the Catholic Church. A persistence in preferring such an accusation, against all evidence, reminds us of the fable concerning the wolf and the lamb. It was the lamb who always muddled the stream! No one can contravene these facts; and if they be unpleasant, we have at least the consolation to think that we had no agency in making them *facts*; and that we allege them at present only in self-vindication.

INTOLERANCE IN AMERICA

Even in our own country, though it boasts so loudly of its freedom, how often have Catholics been made the victims of religious intolerance! Every one knows the fierce spirit which is now invoked against them; every one remembers the smouldering ruins of the Ursuline Convent on Mount Benedict, and those of the Philadelphia churches burned by a savage mob; and all are acquainted with those more recent outrages against our religious liberties to which we have already alluded. We may add, that in some of our hospitals, alms-houses, and other

public institutions, supported by the money of all, Catholics are often denied the services of their clergymen and the consolations of religion, even at their dying hour!³⁰

WHO ORIGINATED IT, AND WHO GAVE THE FIRST EXAMPLE
OF TOLERATION?

On the contrary, have Catholics ever persecuted, or have they ever shown even the slightest disposition to persecute, their dissenting brethren in this country? If they have, we desire to know when and where they made the attempt. One thing is certain —and no one can deny it, or rob them of this glory: they were the first who reared on this broad continent, in their own noble colony of Maryland, the glorious banner of civil and religious liberty. All must award them this praise; which they deserve the more, because, at that very time, the Puritans of New England, and the Episcopalians of Virginia were busily engaged in persecuting their brother Protestants for conscience sake;³¹ and the former were, moreover, enacting proscriptive blue laws, and hanging witches!

ARE CATHOLICS THE ENEMIES OF REPUBLICAN
GOVERNMENT?

II. Come we now to the other charge against Catholics—that they cannot, consistently with their

³⁰ Cases of this petty persecution have occurred in Cincinnati, and in other places, particularly in the Eastern and Northern States.

³¹ See Bancroft's History—Maryland.

principles, be good citizens of a republican government. Catholics cannot consistently be republicans! And pray, who originated all the free principles which lie at the basis of our own noble Constitution? Who gave us trial by jury, *habeas corpus*, stationary courts, and the principle—for which we fought and conquered in our revolutionary struggle against Protestant England—that taxes are not to be levied without the free consent of those who pay them? Are we indebted to Protestantism for even *one* of these cardinal elements of free government? No; not for one. They all date back to the good old Catholic times, in the Middle Ages—some three hundred years before the dawn of the Reformation! Our Catholic forefathers gave them all to us; not one of them do we owe to Protestants.

WHAT CATHOLICITY AND PROTESTANTISM HAVE DONE FOR HUMAN LIBERTY

Again, we are indebted to Catholics for all the republics which ever existed in Christian times, down to the year 1776; for those of Switzerland, Venice, Genoa, Andorra, San Marino, and a host of minor free commonwealths, which sprang up in the “Dark” Ages. Some of these republics lingered until a comparatively recent date; some still exist, proud monuments and unanswerable evidences of Catholic devotion to freedom. These facts no one can deny; they stand out too boldly on the historic record. They are acknowledged by Protestants, no less than by Catholics. We subjoin the testimony of an able writer in the *New York Tribune*, believed

to be Bayard Taylor, who is connected with the management of that journal. This distinguished traveler—a staunch Protestant—appeals to history, and speaks from personal observation. He writes:

Truth compels us to add that the oldest republic now existing is that of San Marino, not only Catholic but wholly surrounded by the especial dominion of the Popes, who might have crushed it like an egg-shell at any time these last thousand years—but they didn't. The only republic we ever traveled in besides our own is Switzerland, half of its cantons or states entirely Catholic, yet never that we have heard of unfaithful to the cause of freedom. They were nearly all Roman Catholics, from the Southern cantons of Switzerland, whom Austria so ruthlessly expelled from Lombardy after the suppression of the last revolt in Milan, accounting them natural born republicans and revolutionists; and we suppose Austria is not a Know-Nothing on this point. We never heard the Catholics of Hungary accused of backwardness in the late glorious struggle of their country for freedom, though its leaders were Protestants, fighting against a leading Catholic power avowedly in favor of religious as well as civil liberty. And chivalric, unhappy Poland, almost wholly Catholic, has made as gallant struggles for freedom as any other nation, while of the three despotisms that crushed her but one was Catholic. But enough. We do not hope to stop the crusade of intolerance and violence now setting against the Catholics, calling for their disfranchisement, and threatening their temporary exclusion from all public trusts. Epidemics of this sort must have their course; and this one has some truth and a large amount of honest bigotry on which to base its operations. Quite a number, whose religion never till now did them much good or harm, will ride into office on the back of their resonant Protestantism, and that will be the end of the matter.

The Reformation dawned on the world in the year 1517. What did it do for the cause of human freedom from that date, down to 1776—when our own Republic arose? Did it strike one blow for liberty during these two centuries and a half? Did it originate one republican principle, or found one solitary

republic? Not one. In Germany, where it had full sway, it ruthlessly trampled in the dust all the noble franchises of the Catholic Middle Ages; it established a political despotism everywhere; it united Church and State; in a word it brought about that very state of things which continues to exist, with but slight amelioration, even down to the present day. In England, it did the same; it broke down the bulwarks of the British constitution, derived from the Catholic *Magna Charta*; it set at naught popular rights, and gave to the king or queen unlimited power in Church and State; and it required a bloody struggle and a revolution, one hundred and fifty years afterwards, to restore to something of their former integrity the old chartered rights of the British people.³²

CHARLES CARROLL OF CARROLTON

Thus Protestantism has boasted much, but it has really done little for the cause of human freedom. But are we not at least indebted to it for our own Revolution, and for the liberties which it has secured for us? We cheerfully award to our Protestant fellow-citizens the praise, which is so justly due them, for *their* share in the glorious struggle; but they should also, in common justice, allow to Catholics the credit of having zealously cooperated with them, to the full extent of their means, in bringing about a result so glorious and so beneficial. He who was the most wealthy among the signers of our

³² For more on this subject, see the Essay on the "Influence of Catholicity on Civil Liberty," p. 180, *seqq.*

Declaration of Independence, and who consequently periled most in putting his name to that instrument, was the Catholic Charles Carroll, of Carrollton; whom Providence permitted to survive all his fellow patriots, as if to rebuke the fierce and anti-republican spirit of intolerance, which was so soon to be evoked from the abyss against his brethren in religion. Catholic soldiers fought side by side with their Protestant brethren in the patriotic struggle; and when our energies were exhausted, and the stoutest hearts entertained the most gloomy forebodings as to the final issue, Catholic France stepped gallantly forth to the rescue of our infant freedom, almost crushed by an overwhelming English *Protestant* tyranny!³³ Many of our most sagacious statesmen have believed, that, but for this timely aid, our Declaration of Independence could scarcely have been made good.

WASHINGTON AND THE CATHOLICS

Our enemies point, with an air of triumph, to the principles of Washington. We cheerfully accept the appeal. After the struggle was over, and Washington was unanimously elected first President of the new Republic, he received a congratulatory address from the Catholics of the country, in which the following passage is found:

This prospect of national prosperity is peculiarly pleasing to us on another account, because whilst our country preserves her freedom and independence, we shall have a well founded title to claim from her justice equal rights of citizenship, as the price of

³³ Catholic Spain also subsequently lent us her aid against England.

our blood spilt under your eyes, and of our common exertions for her defense under your auspicious conduct; rights rendered more dear to us by the remembrance of former hardships.³⁴

To this portion of the address, the father of his country replied as follows:

As mankind become more liberal, they will be more apt to allow, that all those who conduct themselves as worthy members of the community are equally entitled to the protection of civil government. I hope ever to see America among the foremost nations in examples of justice and liberality. And I presume that your fellow-citizens will not forget *the patriotic part which you took in the accomplishment of their revolution, and the establishment of their government; or, the important assistance they received from a nation in which the Roman Catholic faith is professed.*³⁵

We ask no more than that to which Washington believed us justly entitled—a fair share in the civil and religious liberties which our fathers aided to secure equally to all American citizens. We ask for no exclusive privilege whatsoever; we claim only our clear and undoubted rights, in common with our fellow-citizens.

THE TEMPORAL POWER OF THE POPES

But are not Catholics the subjects of a foreign prince, the Pope? This slander—like almost everything else said against us—has been refuted so many thousand times already, that we are almost afraid to tire the patience, or insult the understanding of

³⁴ The Address was signed by Bishop Carroll of Baltimore, on the part of the Catholic clergy, and by Charles Carroll of Carrollton, Daniel Carroll, Thomas Fitzimmons, and Dominic Lynch, on the part of the Catholic laity. See "Biographical Sketch of the Most Rev. John Carroll," by John Carroll Brent; pp. 146,147.

³⁵ Spark's "Life and Writings of Washington," vol. xii.

our readers by answering it again. No man of common intelligence or information need be told, at this late day, that the obedience we owe to the Pope is confined entirely to religion and to spiritual things; and that he neither claims, nor we allow, any jurisdiction over us in temporal matters affecting our civil allegiance. This question has been so long settled throughout the civilized world, that its revival at present appears to be wholly useless, if not utterly absurd.³⁶ When it was a question, more than sixty years ago, of removing some of the cruel penal laws under which the Catholics of England had been so long suffering, this very question in regard to the nature and extent of Papal jurisdiction was discussed; and it was then settled to the entire satisfaction of Mr. Pitt and of the whole British Parliament, which accordingly passed the Catholic Relief Bill.³⁷ The oath of allegiance freely taken by Catho-

³⁶ As early as the beginning of the seventeenth century, St. Francis de Sales deprecated the discussion of this question on many accounts, and among other reasons, because he considered it "useless, since the Pope, in fact, at that day asked nothing of kings and princes in this respect—*inutile, parceque le Pape, par le fait, ne demande rien aujourd'hui aux rois et aux princes pour ce regard.*" Letter to a Lady. *Vie du Saint, par le Curé de St. Sulpice*, in 2 volumes. Vol. ii, p. 106 (Paris, 1854).

³⁷ Mr. Pitt made inquiries on this subject at the Catholic universities of the Sorbonne, Louvain, Douay, Alcalá, and Salamanca. Their answers were all distinct and unanimous, as follows:

I. That the Pope or cardinals, or any body of men, or any individual of the Church of Rome, has not, nor have, any civil authority, power, jurisdiction, or preeminence whatsoever, within the realm of England.

II. That the Pope, or cardinals, or any body of men, or any individual of the Church of Rome, cannot absolve or dispense with his Majesty's subjects from their oath of allegiance, upon any pretext whatsoever.

III. That there is no principle in the tenets of the Catholic faith, by which Catholics are justified in not keeping faith with heretics,

lic bishops, and members of Parliament, and officers of the government in Great Britain and Ireland, with the sanction of the Popes themselves, expressly disclaims belief in any civil power or jurisdiction over British subjects, as inherent in the Sovereign Pontiffs.

DECLARATIONS OF ARCHBISHOP CARROLL AND THE
AMERICAN BISHOPS

To prevent all possibility of misunderstanding on this subject, and to remove every pretext for calumny, the Popes authorized a change in the oath taken by a bishop at his consecration, striking out all obscure clauses of feudal origin, and retaining those only which promised obedience in spirituals. What more than this could be asked by any reasonable man, for the final settlement of the question? The Catholic bishops of the United States, with the express sanction of Rome, take the oath, as thus modified; and they have more than once officially declared, both individually and in their collective capacity, their solemn belief that the Roman Pontiff has none but spiritual power and jurisdiction, outside of his own immediate states. The first Catholic Bishop of the country—the venerable Carroll, of Baltimore³⁸

or other persons differing from them in religious opinions, in any transactions, either of a public or a private nature.

See the documents, at greater length, in Butler's "Book of the Church," Appendix I, p. 287-8.

³⁸ It may not be generally known, that Dr. Franklin, when minister to France, had several conferences with the Nuncio of the Pope on the subject of having a Catholic bishop appointed for America; that he approved of the plan, in order that American Catholics might not be dependent on an English bishop; and that he recommended for the post Dr. Carroll, his friend and companion in the mission to Canada.

—wrote as follows on this subject, in a pastoral letter issued February 22, 1797: ³⁹

There would indeed be a foundation for the reproach intended by the words *foreign jurisdiction*, if we acknowledged in the successor of St. Peter any power or prerogative, which clashed in the least degree with the duty we owe to our country or its laws. To our country we owe allegiance and the tender of our best services and property, when they are necessary for its defense; to the Vicar of Christ we owe obedience in things *purely spiritual*. Happily, there is no competition in their respective claims on us, nor any difficulty in rendering to both the submission which they have a right to claim. Our country commands, and enforces by outward coercion, the services which tend to the preservation and defense of that personal security, and of that property, for the sake of which political societies were formed, and men agreed to live under the protection of, and in obedience to civil government. The Vicar of Christ, as visible head of His Church, watches over the integrity and soundness of doctrine, and makes use of means and weapons that act only on the souls of men, to enforce the duties of religion, the purity of worship, and ecclesiastical discipline.

LETTER TO THE POPE

Our bishops, assembled in solemn council at Baltimore, have often publicly proclaimed principles identical with those just announced, as emanating from the venerable founder of our hierarchy. We can make room for but two extracts, the first of which is taken from a pastoral letter issued by them in the sixth Provincial Council of Baltimore, held in May, 1846; from which it will be seen that our bishops, in their collective and official capacity, are very plain and explicit in their declarations on this very point:

The paternal authority of the chief Bishop is constantly misrepresented and assailed by the adversaries of our holy religion,

³⁹ "Biographical Sketch," etc., *sup. cit.*, p. 137-8.

especially in this country, and is viewed with suspicion even by some who acknowledge its powerful influence in preserving faith and unity. It is unnecessary for us to tell you, brethren, that the kingdom of Christ, of which the Bishop of Rome, as successor of Peter, has received the keys, is not of this world; and that the obedience due to the Vicar of the Saviour is in no way inconsistent with your civil allegiance, your social duties as citizens, or your rights as men. We can confidently appeal to the whole tenor of our instructions, not only in our public addresses, but in our most confidential communications, and you can bear witness that we have always taught you to render to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, to God the things which are God's. Be not, then heedful of the misrepresentations of foolish men, who, unable to combat the evidences of our Faith, seek to excite unjust prejudice against that authority which has always proved its firmest support. Continue to practice justice and charity towards all your fellow-citizens—respect the magistrates—observe the laws—shun tumult and disorder, as free, and not as having liberty as a cloak for malice, but as the servants of God. You, brethren, have been called unto liberty: only make not liberty an occasion to the flesh, but by charity of the spirit, serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Thus you will put to shame the calumniators of our holy Faith, and vindicate it more effectually, than by any abstract profession or disclaimer.

But there is another declaration, made by the bishops who composed the fifth Council of Baltimore, held in May, 1843, which has even more weight in settling this question; because it occurs in an official letter addressed to the Pope by the assembled American prelates. The Pontiff, far from being offended at so explicit a disavowal by the American bishops of all Papal authority and jurisdiction in merely civil matters, says in his official answer: "Your letter was most pleasing to us";⁴⁰ and he praises the zeal of our prelates. Here is the extract alluded to—the bishops are speaking of

⁴⁰ *Gratissimæ nobis fuere vestrae literæ.*

the efforts made by our enemies to put down the Church in this country:

They spread doubtful rumors against us among the people; with untiring efforts, they circulate among the ignorant and uninformed, books which calumniate our most holy religion; they leave no means untried to infect with their errors their Catholic servants; and . . . although our forefathers poured out their blood like water for the defense of our liberties against a *Protestant* oppressor, they yet seek to render us, their fellow-citizens, suspected by, and odious to the government, *by falsely asserting that we are reduced to servitude under the civil and political jurisdiction of a foreign prince, namely of the Roman Pontiff, and that we are therefore unfaithful to the republic!*⁴¹

But did not the Popes formerly claim the right of deposing princes, and of absolving their subjects from the oath of allegiance? They certainly did; and so did we claim the same right, when we deposed George III, and declared ourselves “absolved” from our oath of allegiance to him: and as our claim was assuredly nothing against liberty, but all for liberty, so was also that of the Popes. In every instance of its exercise, known to us, the Popes struck a blow at tyranny, and one, at the same time, for the security and liberty of an oppressed people. Instead of blaming, we should rather applaud them, for thus keeping alive, amidst political darkness and confusion, that spark of popular liberty, which was

⁴¹ *Dubias contra nos in vulgus voces spargunt, libros qui calumniantur sanctissimam nostram religionem omni nisu apud rudes ignarosque divulgant; servos suos Catholicos haeresum suarum veneno ut inficiant nihil intactum relinquunt; patremque suum qui ab initio mendax fuit imitantes, nos Catholicos concives suos, quamvis nostri sanguinem suum tanquam aquam profuderint pro vindicatione libertatis contra oppressorem acatholicum, gubernio suspectos obnoxiosque reddere, utpote, ut falso asserunt, sub alieni principis, Pontificis sc. Romani ditione politica et civili in servitutem redactos, ideoque reipublicas infidos. Concilia Baltimor., p. 223.*

destined, a little later, to illumine the political horizon of Europe. That the friends of European monarchs should object to this Papal claim, we can readily understand, because its exercise was necessarily directed against their tyranny; but we cannot so easily explain the opposition to it manifested by our modern advocates of free principles. Yet the monarchists of Europe, along with Mr. Pitt, have long since been fully satisfied on this point; whereas our shrewder republicans have just begun to open their eyes to the awful danger to our freedom growing out of a claim, no longer advanced even by the Popes themselves!

Having in the following pages devoted a special chapter to the examination of the historical facts connected with the first exercise of the deposing power by a Roman Pontiff, we must refer our readers to it for full details on the subject.⁴² Suffice it to say here, that the circumstances under which this extraordinary power was first claimed having long since ceased, the Popes have, for nearly three centuries, virtually abandoned the claim, by making no attempt at its exercise.

With a view to show that the influence of the Catholic Church tends to debase its members, our adversaries direct attention to the material condition of those countries which have continued faithful to the ancient religion, and upon which the light of the Reformation has never dawned. These, they say, are very far inferior to the neighboring Protestant communities in thrift, in literature, in morals,

⁴² See Chapter V, "Age of Pope Gregory VII—the Deposing Power," pp. 152 *seqq.*

in liberty, and especially in material and social improvement; and this inferiority they trace to the difference of religious influence. We answer, by denying both the fact as stated, and the inference thence drawn. Abundant evidence can be alleged to show, that, if in some respects Protestant are superior to Catholic nations, in others the latter far surpass the former; and that, in both cases, a difference of religious principles has much less to do with the matter than is commonly believed by those opposed to Catholicity.

To those, again, who are in the habit of pointing, with a sneer, to the comparatively degraded condition of Mexico and South America, as a natural consequence of the Catholic religion there professed, we would beg to observe, that the masses of the population in Spanish and Portuguese America are either of pure Indian descent, or of mixed races; and that consequently, it is manifestly unreasonable to expect them to have attained to the same elevated social level as ourselves, who belong to the much boasted and loudly boasting Anglo-Saxon stock!⁴³ As well might we expect to find our own high degree of civilization in the descendants of our North American Indians! There is this important difference between our policy and that of our Catholic neighbors, in regard to the treatment of the aboriginal inhabitants of this continent; that, whereas we have exterminated them or driven them out into the wilderness, they, on the contrary, have settled down in their midst, intermarried with them, taught

⁴³ Not unmixed, however; for we have a strong infusion of the Celtic blood.

them Christianity, and thus sought to raise them up in the social scale, even at the expense of lowering themselves. While they have met the aborigines half-way, and have been content to occupy with them a middle ground between a high and a low level of civilization, we, wrapped up in our inborn complacency, and vaunting our high social position as the necessary result of our “Anglo-Saxon blood,” have looked with contempt upon the poor savages whom our fathers found in the country—much as the proud Pharisee looked down upon the poor publican—have disdained all sympathy for, or alliance with them, and have caused them to melt away before our advancing and exclusive civilization, as the snow melts away before the solar rays! The comparison between us and our Catholic neighbors may excite our complacency, and flatter our pride; it says but little for our humanity, and less still for our religious zeal or Christian charity. Our Protestant fellow citizens would do well never to vaunt their superiority over their Mexican and South American brethren! American Catholics, on the contrary, have reason to be proud of the Catholic colonists who explored and peopled our continent.

To awaken suspicion against the Catholic priesthood, the public prints have long been circulating among the people the extraordinary assertion, that Lafayette warned American patriots against priestly influence in the following language: “If ever the liberty of the United States is destroyed, it will be by Romish priests.” The fact of such a declaration coming from one who was a Catholic himself, if he was anything, bears the stamp of improbability, if

not of downright absurdity on its very face; yet it passed current for truth, and was, we think, generally believed by the masses, who are prepared to devour any absurdity, provided it militate against Catholics! Now what will the impartial public think, when it is ascertained, that this charge, like most others which have been lately circulated in the country to our disadvantage, is not only utterly groundless, but it is directly the reverse of truth!

It makes the French patriot say, in fact, directly the opposite of what he did say! Here is the extract from his letter to a Protestant gentleman in New York, written from Paris in 1829, shortly after his return from his visit to the United States; which letter no doubt gave occasion for concocting the calumny: “

The friendly expressions of regard for my health and happiness conveyed in your kind letter to me of the 15th ultimo, I beg you to be assured, are grateful to my feelings; and I shall cherish the recollection of the many services and kindnesses towards me, on the part of both yourself and lady, while I was your guest in America, as among the most pleasing reminiscences connected with my late visit to the United States. . . . I cannot but admire your noble sentiments of devotion and attachment to your country and its institutions. But I must be permitted to assure you that the fears which in your patriotic zeal you seem to entertain—that if ever the liberty of the United States is destroyed, it will be by Romish priests—are certainly without any shadow of foundation whatever. An intimate acquaintance of more than half a century with the prominent and influential priests and members of that Church, both in England and America, warrants me in assuring you, that you need entertain no apprehension of danger to your republican institutions from that quarter.

But we are farther told, that Catholics in this country stand aloof from their Protestant fellow-

⁴⁴ Published in the *Cincinnati Inquirer*, and other journals.

citizens, and form a virtually separate society, having neither feelings nor interests in common with others; that they do not unite, at least cordially, with the rest of the community in carrying out our system of common schools; and that they cast their vote in a body for a particular political party. Let us briefly examine each of these three heads of accusation.

ARE AMERICAN CATHOLICS A SEPARATE COMMUNITY?

1. If the charge of our forming a separate community, with separate feelings and interests, refer to our religious organization and principles, we must plead guilty; it is surely not our fault, but our privilege, to differ on religious matters with such of our fellow-citizens as belong either to no religious communion whatever, or are members of the various conflicting sects which exist among us. We cheerfully allow to them the right of thinking and acting for themselves in matters of religion without molestation, and they should surely grant us the same freedom: *Hanc veniam petimusque damusque vicissim*. This privilege should be the more cheerfully accorded to us, as we propose no innovation, but merely claim the right of walking, as our forefathers, as well as the ancestors of our accusers themselves walked, and went to heaven, for fifteen hundred years, before the world was blessed or cursed with this Babel-like confusion of tongues in the matter of religion.

If the accusation be meant to imply, that we are a separate *civil* community, and that, as citizens,

we have feelings and interests different from those of others, we repel the charge as an injurious slander. Catholics cordially participate in all our civic anniversary festivals; they pray in their churches for all their fellow-citizens, and for the permanent prosperity of this free government;⁴⁵ they nobly fight the battles of the country, and they are as willing to shed their blood in its defense or for its honor, as any of their brethren. In a word, they yield to none in patriotism and valor. About one-half of our regular army—if not even a larger proportion—is composed of Roman Catholic soldiers; a large number of the sailors and marines, attached to our young but vigorous navy, are also Catholics; and our chief officers in both arms of the service have often praised their fidelity to our flag, and their unfaltering courage in the hour of danger. In every battle-field of our country—in the two wars against *Protestant* England, as well as in the late war against *Catholic* Mexico—Catholics have freely bled, by the side of their Protestant fellow-citizens, for the honor and triumph of our country.

ARCHBISHOP CARROLL AND BISHOP DUBOURG

After the death of General Washington, Bishop Carroll pronounced a splendid eulogy on his character, in the cathedral of Baltimore;⁴⁶ and after the

⁴⁵ The beautiful prayer, for the ““Ruling Powers,”” composed by Archbishop Carroll, is frequently read in our churches.

⁴⁶ This solid and noble oration is published in full in the ““Biographical Sketch of Archbishop Carroll,”” above quoted, 158, *seqq.* The panegyric, by one who knew so well the father of his country, produced a profound sensation at the time it was delivered.

Battle of New Orleans, General Jackson was received in triumph in the Catholic cathedral, the laurel garland of victory, woven by Catholic hands, was placed on his brow by a Catholic priest; and the noble hero might be seen weeping with joyful emotion, as he listened and responded to the eloquent and patriotic address delivered on the occasion by the Rev. M. Dubourg. In a beautiful address delivered in Washington by Mr. Livingston, on the anniversary of the Battle of New Orleans, the distinguished orator feelingly alluded to the pavement of the church being worn by the holy knees of the Ursuline nuns, praying fervently that victory might perch on the American banner, and drawing from the feast of the day—that of St. Victoria—an omen of success! We repeat it, the charge, understood in this sense, is a base calumny.

THE COMMON SCHOOL SYSTEM

2. But we are not friendly to the common schools. Our answer is at hand. Let the Protestant majority, in this free country, make those schools such as not to wound the religious feelings, nor endanger the religious faith of our children, and then may they, with some show of reason, taunt us with not cheerfully uniting in patronizing them. Let them remove from them all sectarian books, all sectarian influences, all teachers who abuse their position for purposes of proselytism; let them not force upon our children the reading of a version of the Bible, which, in common with four-fifths of Christendom, we consider neither a genuine nor a complete rendering

of the Divine Word: ⁴⁷—and then they will make it not only our interest, but our pleasure to unite with them in supporting the common schools. It will be our interest; for, in common with our fellow-citizens, we pay our taxes for the erection and maintenance of those schools; and if we do not patronize them, we have to incur the enormous additional expense of erecting separate schools for our own children, and are thus double taxed for educational purposes. The motive which would prompt us to make so great a sacrifice must be indeed a very strong one; and it is really we who have the best right to complain, not the Protestant majority which enforces such a hardship upon us. If we could conscientiously do it, we have every possible motive to patronize the common schools; but we hold that it is better far to suffer any earthly loss, rather than to jeopardize our faith or that of our children. Life is short, eternity never ending; and “what doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” ⁴⁸

In countries much less free than ours, the common school system is so organized, that Catholics and Protestants have separate schools. Austria, with all her alleged tyranny, and with her triumphant Catholic majority of population, freely grants separate schools, supported out of the common fund, to the Protestant minority.⁴⁹ England, with all her

⁴⁷ And in which a committee of Protestant ministers, lately assembled in New York for the purpose of preparing a revised edition of the Bible, discovered no less than twenty-four thousand errors of translation!

⁴⁸ Matthew xvi.

⁴⁹ See late Canadian papers, *passim*.

hereditary hatred of Catholicity, permits the Catholics to have their own separate schools; and this is not found to conflict in practice with her common school system. Lower Canada, with its immense Catholic majority, freely concedes the privilege of separate schools to the small Protestant minority; and every one who reads the public prints must be familiar with the controversy, which is now carried on in Canada, and even in the Canadian Parliament, on the subject of having this same equitable provision extended, in all its privileges, to the Catholic minority of Upper Canada. Strange, that Catholics, when in power, should be so liberal in granting a privilege, which a Protestant majority is so slow to concede!

Why should the freest country on the face of the earth form an exception, and be in fact the most exacting and tyrannical of all, in this matter of education? Can it be, that the immense Protestant majority in this country is apprehensive of the influence, which, in the case of this equitable provision being adopted, would be exercised by the small Catholic minority? Or are they afraid of entering the lists of free competition with their Catholic fellow-citizens? While all other pursuits are left open to honest emulation, and the rivalry does good to all, why should education alone be trammeled, by being made a State monopoly?

We are persuaded, that the provision for separate schools would greatly promote the permanency and prosperity of the common school system itself. It would destroy an odious restriction on parental rights, it would awaken a new energy in the cause

of education, it would open new fields for generous rivalry; and, above all, it would render education much cheaper, and thereby lighten that heavy burden of taxation which is now weighing us down. It is a generally conceded fact, that Catholics can educate more cheaply than Protestants; and this may be one reason why the latter are not willing to hazard a free competition with the former. Grant separate schools, and our word for it, you will not have to pay much more than half the taxes you have been in the habit of disbursing for educational purposes. While we cheerfully submit to be guided by the principle of taxing the rich in order to educate the poor—since under our present circumstances, it seems to be the only practicable means for effecting an object so desirable—we naturally object, in common with all impartial and sensible men, to any excessive or unnecessary taxation.⁵⁰

In Catholic times, no taxation whatever was necessary for educational purposes, especially for the education of the poor. Under the influence of Catholic charity and zeal for education, colleges and schools sprang up spontaneously in every part of Europe. These schools were *free*, in every sense of the word; no one was taxed to erect them, no one had to pay for entering them.⁵¹ The first college, the first schools, and the first hospital, ever established on the North American continent, were erected by

⁵⁰ It is generally known, that what is undertaken and executed by the State usually costs much more money than what is done by individuals; and the same may be said of works carried on by corporations.

⁵¹ See, for details, the Chapter on "Schools and Universities in the 'Dark' Ages," p. 145 *seqq.*

Catholics. In all countries and in all ages, Catholics, and particularly the Catholic clergy, have been foremost in advancing the cause of popular education.⁵²

It would be a subject of very useful inquiry, whether our common school system, as at present managed, be really conducive to a high tone of refinement, and to the development of sound morals, in the youth educated under its auspices. It is a Christian principle, of pretty general acceptance, that human nature is corrupt and more prone to evil than to good; and that consequently the religion of Christ is indispensably necessary for healing its evil tendency and causing it to walk in the path of virtue. The theory, which makes morality practicable, or even possible, without religion, is evidently more pagan than Christian. If this be so, how can the children educated in our common schools be properly trained to sound morality, without a course of religious instruction, which the system excludes? To say, that sufficient religious knowledge for the purpose may be imparted, without what is called *sectarian* teaching, seems to us wholly preposterous. To be adequate, the religious instruction should be detailed and practical, not general, vague, and theoretical; but the latter only can be compatible with our present school system, while the former could scarcely be carried out without trenching on forbidden ground. But let us look at the practical influence of the system, as exhibited in the general moral conduct of the youth educated in our common

⁵² See the Chapter—“Literature and the Catholic Clergy,” p. 96. Read also the Chapter on “Literature and the Arts in the Middle Ages,” p. 77, *seqq.*

schools. Do these, in general, show, by their moral deportment, that they have been properly trained? Have they been taught politeness, respect for age, obedience to parents, morality in thought, word, and deed? We fear not. Our youth are growing more and more licentious and demoralized, with each succeeding generation; our boys particularly become men before they are half grown; they have learned all else better, than the art of governing their passions. The late fearful increase of crime, especially in our cities and towns, is a sad proof of this increasing demoralization. To what an abyss of vice are we hastening! There must be something sadly wrong somewhere.

FOREIGNERS, WHAT HAVE THEY DONE FOR THE COUNTRY?

3. But Catholics, especially those of foreign birth, vote together, and vote for a particular political party: the liberties of our country are therefore endangered from this constantly augmenting foreign influence. This charge is groundless, both in its facts and in its inferences. In the first place, our native-born Catholics have been heretofore divided, almost equally, between the two leading political parties of the country; in the second place, though the large majority of the Catholics of foreign birth have been in the habit of voting with the democrats, yet they have been far from unanimous on the subject; in the third place, the number of Catholics in this country is now, and is likely to continue to be, much too insignificant to rule the country in one way or another, either for good or for evil.

The following candid and sensible remarks from the *Boston Post*, a political print of some standing, contain so much sound reasoning on this subject, based upon facts tending to show the glaring absurdity of the charge that "foreigners are taking the country," that we will be pardoned for republishing them entire:

It is said that we shall be overrun with foreigners; that they will rise upon native citizens and overpower them; that Catholicism will prevail and deprive America of its liberties. These assertions have been reiterated so often that thousands really fear such results. Take the former apprehension, and let facts, so far as they bear on the question of physical force, say how groundless that fear is. In the first place, for the whole time we have been a nation, it is a fact that no such attempt has been made; and if it ever should be made, such is the admirable working of our institutions, that the rule of a mob is utterly out of the question. Permanent success, even where the foreign population outweighs the native population, is an impossibility; for the whole force of the country would at once be invoked to suppress such a rule. In the next place, consider the utter folly, want of foresight, and suicidal policy of such an attempt, if it should ever be made. Of our now thirty millions of population one million ⁵³ only are from Ireland: of the thirty-eight thousand churches that the census of 1850 shows as being in the country, the Catholic are set down at one thousand two hundred and twenty-one; and of the eighty-seven millions of church property, the Catholics have nine millions. Now, cannot this immense preponderance of Protestantism and of Americanism take care of itself? Is it not perfectly preposterous to suppose for a moment that the Irish Catholics will ever attempt to "rise," as the phrase is, with such an enormous disparity against them? It is due, it is but bare justice, to our foreign population to say, that not only has there been no attempt at rising, but their conduct—save only in cases when heated by liquor or otherwise excited—has been almost invariably that of peaceable citizens, submissive to the laws. They have a right to have such a certificate, as to the past, to stand in their favor;

⁵³ The number is probably greater; but this does not affect the argument.

and when we consider their position among us, we believe there is no more danger of their "rising" than there is of the falling of the stars.

THE "FOREIGN VOTE"

Much has been said and written of late years about the "foreign vote." Both parties, on the eve of elections, have been in the habit of courting "foreigners"; who have thus, against their own choice and will, been singled out from the rest of the community, and placed in a false and odious position, by political demagogues for their own vile purposes. That they have been thus severed from their fellow-citizens, and insulted with the compliment of their influence as a separate body, has not been so much their fault, as it has been their misfortune. From the successful party they have generally received—with a few honorable exceptions—little but coldness *after* the election; while from the party defeated, they have invariably received nothing but abuse and calumny. So they have been, without their own agency, placed between two fires, and have been caressed and outraged by turns. Any appeal made to them by politicians, in their character of religionists or foreigners, and not in that of American citizens, is manifestly an insult, whether so intended or not; and we trust that Catholics will always view such appeals in this light. Whenever it is question of State policy, they can have no interests different from those of their fellow-citizens. The laws which will be good for the latter, will be good for them; at least they can live under any system of equal legislation which will

suit the Protestant majority, with whom they cheerfully share all the burdens of the country.

WHAT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH SAYS TO HER MEMBERS

The Catholic bishops and clergy of the country have discreetly stood aloof, and wisely abstained from exercising any influence in the exciting political contests which have successively arisen. We ourselves, though to the manor born, have never even voted on a political question; and we believe that most of our brother prelates and clergy have adopted the same prudent precaution; not surely through any want of interest in the country, but chiefly with a view to remove from the enemies of our Church the slightest pretext for slandering our religious character. The only influence we have sought to bring to bear on the members of our communion, has been invariably in the interests of peace, of order, and of charity for all men, even for our most bitter enemies. Whenever we have had occasion to address our people on the eve of elections, we have counseled them to avoid all violence, to beware of being carried away by passion, to be temperate, to respect the feelings and principles of their opponents; and, in the exercise of their franchise as citizens, to vote conscientiously for the men and measures they might think most likely to advance the real and permanent interests of the Republic. We defy any one to prove, that we have ever attempted to exercise any other influence than this. The contrary has been occasionally asserted by unprincipled demagogues, for political effect; but the accusation, like

many others made in the heat of political contests, has in every instance turned out to be a grievous slander; which was scarcely believed at the time, even by those who were most busy in giving it circulation.

Never since the foundation of the Republic has it been heard of, that the Catholic bishops or clergy have taken an active part in conducting the proceedings of political conventions, or in fomenting political excitement, in the name of the religion of peace and love. They are not, and never have been, either Abolitionists or Freesoilers, ultraists or politico-religious alarmists. Nor have they ever ventured, either collectively or individually, to address huge remonstrances to Congress, threatening vengeance in the name of Almighty God, unless certain particular measures were passed or repealed! Never have they been heard brawling in the public streets and highways, haranguing in violent language the already excited populace, lashing their passions into fury, and openly exciting them to deeds of mob violence and bloodshed! Never have they been known to parade the Bible in noisy political processions, thus prostituting the holy Book, which breathes naught but peace and good will towards all men, to the vile purposes of political faction and sectarian strife! Ministers of other denominations have done, or countenanced all these things; and we cheerfully leave to them all the glory, whether religious or political, which they can possibly derive from such a line of conduct.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ It is also well known that, particularly during the late elections, Protestant ministers took an active part in the canvass. In several

Catholics of foreign birth are charged, in the same breath, with voting the democratic ticket, and with being the secret or open enemies of republican government! Is it then true, that a man cannot be a democrat, without being a traitor to his country? If so, then have the destinies of this great Republic been ruled, with very slight intermission, for nearly thirty years by an organized band of traitors, consisting of the vast majority of our population! Catholics can well afford to be traitors in such goodly company. We are no politicians ourselves, and, so far as we have had any political leanings, they have heretofore been to the policy of the Whigs; but in common with every man of sound judgment and liberal mind, we reprobate the spirit, which would thus inconsistently and absurdly brand the advocates of different principles as enemies of the country and of all liberty. The genius of our noble Constitution is in favor of allowing to every man the largest liberty of opinion in matters of State policy, without his thereby incurring the risk of having his motives questioned or his loyalty impeached. If any charge could be consistently made or sustained against this large portion of our Catholic population, it would be, on the contrary, that they have been generally in favor of too enlarged a liberty, to tally with the views of those who profess to belong to the con-

instances, they were even candidates for office, and in some cases elected. It is they, and not the Catholics, who have thus attempted to mingle religion with politics; and if ever there be brought about a union of Church and State in this Republic, it will surely not be accomplished by Catholics, but by those precisely who are foremost in the crusade against them! Let the lovers of freedom look to it in time! The Protestant ministers may, in fact, be said to be at the head of the abolition party in the North.

servative school; but to charge them with an intention to undermine our Republic, is simply an absurdity, as glaring as it is malicious.

Those who are loudest in their denunciations of "foreigners" seem to forget what "foreigners" have done for the country. They have filled our army and navy; they have fought our battles; they have leveled our forests, peopled our vast unoccupied territory, and filled our cities with operatives and mechanics; they have dug our canals, built our turnpikes and railroads, and have thus promoted, more perhaps than any other class, the improvement of the country and the development of its vast resources; in a word, they have, in every way, largely contributed towards enhancing the wealth and increasing the prosperity of the Republic. Do they deserve nothing but bitter denunciation and unsparing invective for all these services? Are they to be branded as aliens and traitors, for having thus effectually labored to serve their adopted country?

But they are foreigners in feeling and in interest, and they still prefer their own nationality to ours. We answer first, that if this their alleged feeling be excessive, and if it tend to diminish their love for the country of their adoption, it is certainly in so far reprehensible; but where is the evidence that this is the case? Has their lingering love for the country of their birth—with its glowing memories of early childhood and ripening manhood, of a mother's care and a sister's love—interfered in aught with their new class of duties as American citizens? Has it prevented their sharing cheerfully in the burdens, in the labors, and in the perils of the country? We

believe not. Instead of their being unconcerned and indifferent, their chief fault, in the eyes of their enemies, lies precisely in the opposite—in their taking *too much* interest in the affairs of the Republic. We answer, in the second place, that this natural feeling of love for the country of their birth, growing as it does out of that cherished and honorable sentiment which we denominate patriotism, will, in the very nature of things, gradually diminish under the influence of new associations, until it will finally be absorbed into the one homogeneous nationality; and thus the evil—if it be an evil—will remedy itself. The only thing which can possibly keep it alive for any considerable time, would be precisely the narrow and proscriptive policy, adopted in regard to citizens of foreign birth by the Know-Nothings and their sympathizers. The endeavor to stifle this feeling by clamor and violence will but increase its intensity.

THE CHURCH'S EFFORTS TO PROMOTE PEACE AND ORDER

We answer thirdly, that the influence of Catholicity tends strongly to break down all barriers of separate nationalities, and to bring about a brotherhood of citizens, in which the love of our common country and of one another would absorb every sectional feeling. Catholicity is of no nation, of no language, of no people; she knows no geographical bounds; she breaks down all the walls of separation between race and race, and she looks alike upon every people, and tribe, and caste. Her views are as enlarged as the territory which she inhabits; and this is as wide as the world. Jew and Gentile, Greek

and barbarian; Irish, German, French, English, and American, are all alike to her. In this country, to which people of so many nations have flocked for shelter against the evils they endured at home, we have a striking illustration of this truly Catholic spirit of the Church. Germans, Irish, French, Italians, Spaniards, Poles, Hungarians, Hollanders, Belgians, English, Scotch, and Welsh; differing in language, in national customs, in prejudices—in every thing human—are here brought together in the same Church, professing the same faith, and worshiping like brothers at the same altars! The evident tendency of this principle is, to level all sectional feelings and local prejudices, by enlarging the views of mankind, and thus to bring about harmony in society, based upon mutual forbearance and charity. And in fact, so far as the influence of our Church could be brought to bear upon the anomalous condition of society in America, it has been exercised for securing the desirable result of causing all its heterogeneous elements to be merged in the one variegated, but homogeneous nationality. Protestantism isolates and divides; Catholicity brings together and unites. Such have been the results of the two systems in times past; such, from their very nature, must be their influence on society at all times and in all places. . . .

THE CHURCH'S CHARITY FOR ALL MANKIND

The Church weeps, like a tender mother, over the sins of her children; she employs every kind and tender influence to win them back to virtue; she goes

after them in their wanderings, as the Good Shepherd after the strayed sheep; she has no word of reproach or railing to frighten them farther away from the fold; with earnest and unfaltering love, she seeks to reclaim them from their errors; no poverty, no misery however squalid or loathsome, no disease however infectious deters her from pursuing her cherished work of mercy: and if she succeeds in her mission, her heart overflows with unspeakable joy and gladness, and she bears them back with maternal affection to her sanctuary, and lays them tenderly and joyously at the foot of her altars, as noble trophies of her labor of love. Her ministers labor day and night for the spiritual welfare of their people; they wear out their health, and grow prematurely old in assiduous toil among the poor and lowly; they often lay down their lives for their flocks. And if their zeal is not always crowned with success, if scandals still abound, in spite of their exertions to promote virtue, the unfortunate result is surely not owing to their fault, because clearly beyond their control.

ARCHBISHOP KENRICK'S PASTORAL

The Church fails not at all times earnestly to inculcate on her children the duty of being good citizens of this Republic, and of sincerely loving, and praying for *all* their fellow-citizens, even those who hate and revile them. She often addresses them in language similar to that, which was lately employed by one of our first prelates in age, learning, piety, and station—Dr. Kenrick, the Archbishop of Balti-

more—the first episcopal see in the country. We cannot better conclude this chapter than with an extract from his recent pastoral letter; and we are quite sure than every bishop, every priest, and every layman of our Church in this country will cheerfully subscribe to every sentiment and to every word therein contained:

We take this occasion, brethren, to recommend to your most earnest prayers the peace, prosperity, and happiness of these United States, and of all our fellow-citizens. It is not our province, as pastors of the Church, to meddle with political interests: but it is our duty to exhort you to continue faithful to the Constitution and government under which you have the happiness to live, obedient to the laws, respectful to all the civil authorities, and to prove yourselves by your conduct peaceful and orderly citizens. Be not concerned at the suspicions cast on your loyalty and patriotism, and the efforts made to proscribe you, and check the progress of our holy religion. "Who is he that can hurt you, if you be zealous of good? But if, also, you suffer any thing for justice' sake, blessed are ye. And be not afraid of their fear, and be not troubled. But sanctify the Lord Christ in your hearts." Pursue, then, the peaceful path of industry, regardless of political partizanship; shun the use of intoxicating liquors; avoid secret societies; practice your religion; teach it to your children; take every opportunity to perform kind offices towards your fellow-citizens, whatever wrongs you may endure, and pray that God may lead all to the knowledge of the truth. This course of conduct is your best defense—your only security, whilst it will vindicate most effectually the honor of the Church. Keep far away from scenes of danger; from tumult and bloody strife. In the retirement of your chambers, and at the foot of the altar, pour out your hearts in prayer, that God may turn away His anger and in the day of His just visitation may remember mercy. Implore Him to relieve our country from pestilence, which now strews the land with victims, from the disorders of the elements which spread terror and destruction—but, above all, from the maddening influence of the demon of civil discord. Ask Him to continue and perpetuate those free institutions which have hitherto united in social brotherhood and concord the millions of men of various nations and creeds, that, from the Atlantic to the

Pacific, bask in the sunshine of liberty. Pray that to all may be imparted the still greater blessings of faith and love, that we may with one heart and mouth glorify God and fulfill His law, in order to our salvation.

Every true American will reecho these sentiments.

EDITOR'S NOTE. The reader is reminded that these essays of Archbishop Spalding were written three-quarters of a century ago. Many of his statements, therefore, with regard to European nations are no longer true. Subsequent events, both in the political and religious spheres, the Great War especially (1914-1918), have profoundly modified the course of European history. But the statements were true at the time the Archbishop wrote, and have been left unchanged, because of the valuable information which they give.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE AND THE ARTS IN THE MIDDLE AGES

IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECT

LEAVING aside for the present the prejudices and passions of the mob, which may be so readily inflamed, one of the reasons of the anti-Catholic feeling, so prevalent in the United States, is found in the accusation brought against the Church, that she is the enemy of true culture and progress, of popular government and liberty. In these few chapters, we shall endeavor to refute these charges. We begin with literature and the arts in the Middle Ages.

Literature and the arts during the Middle Ages supply a theme at once vast and important: vast, because it comprises a period of nearly one thousand years; and important, because it exhibits the rise and progress to perfection of institutions intimately connected with civilization and political liberty. That period was the nursery of nations, the parent of civilization and of empire. From the partial chaos of those Ages sprang into existence systems of government, which, by their harmony and adaptation to the wants of mankind, are the admiration of the present century.

WRITERS WHO HAVE TREATED IT

The attention of the literary world has been lately awakened to the importance of this subject. Italy, as usual, pioneered the way. About the middle of the last century, the learned Muratori published, in thirty huge folio volumes, the hitherto inedited works of the Middle Ages, to which he annexed copious and learned commentaries of his own. This herculean labor was followed by another work from the same author, in which this giant of modern literature spread out, in six large folio volumes of Essays, the results of his researches into the manners, customs, and antiquities of that period. The very vastness of this work, as well as the size of its tomes, would make one of our modern literati, who loves meager volumes with fine covers, shudder with horror! Muratori was followed by Tiraboschi, another illustrious Italian, whose classical and extensive "History of Italian Literature," has, I think, no equal, and even no parallel in any other language. These works constitute a complete repertory, where the studious inquirer into the history of the Middle Ages may find all that he can reasonably ask for. Among the Germans who have labored to illustrate this subject, we may name Frederick and William Schlegel, Meiners,¹ Eichhorn,² Heeren³; and among more recent writers, Voigt, and Hurter,⁴ learned Protestant divines. The French have also

¹ *Vergleichung der Sitten, etc., des Mittelalters mit denen unsers Jahrhunderts.*

² *Allgemeine Geschichte der Cultur und Literatur.*

³ *Geschichte des Studiums der Classischen Literatur.*

⁴ Since become a Catholic.

done much in this field; it is sufficient for our purpose to name Michaud's "History of the Crusades," and to allude to some learned articles in a periodical work now published in France—and which would reflect honor on any country—"The Annals of Christian Philosophy." Among English writers, Hallam and Maitland have, perhaps, succeeded better than any others; though their works, learned and excellent as they are in many respects, are but pygmies compared to some of those named above.

DIVISION

The beginning and end of the period called the Middle Ages has been variously assigned by chronologists and historians. We prefer, as the most natural and conformable to the great outlines of history, the opinion which dates the commencement of that period from the downfall of the Roman Empire in the West in 476, and fixes its termination at the fall of the same in the East, in 1453—a space of 977 years. The Western Empire, which had commenced with Augustus, terminated about 500 years afterwards in Augustulus, or the little Augustus; and the Eastern, founded by Constantine the Great, when he removed the seat of empire from Rome to Constantinople in 330, terminated 1123 years afterwards in Constantine Paleologus, who might also be called with some propriety Constantine the Little.

That the reader may more easily follow the remarks we have to make upon this subject, we will endeavor, first, to trace the causes which brought about the decline of literature in those Ages; sec-

ondly, to present a rapid historical sketch of the literary condition at various epochs of the period in question; thirdly, to point out the causes which prompted the gradual rise of letters; and fourthly, to take a general survey of the subject, and to answer the question: How much do we owe to those Ages?

A COLOSSUS FALLING

I. The causes of the partial decline of letters during the period of which we are speaking, must be obvious to every reader of history. They are almost identical with those agencies, which gradually weakened, and finally overthrew the Roman Empire in the West. This vast Colossus, which stood with one foot upon the heart of Europe, and the other upon Asia, grasping with one hand northern Africa and with the other the Britains, was destined to share the fate of all earthly institutions. It trembled upon its base, tottered and fell—the victim of its own vastness, and innate tendency to decay. The German and northern hordes had ever been the most formidable enemies of Rome. The same spirit seems to have animated the Goths and Vandals under Alaric and Genseric, Attila and Totila, as had many centuries before brought Brennus with his Gauls before the walls of Rome.

INCURSIONS OF THE NORTHMEN

While Rome continued to be the seat of empire, the efforts of the Northmen through centuries proved unavailing. As often as they attempted invasion,

they were met by the Roman legions under an Adrian, a Marcus Aurelius, or a Septimius Severus, and were driven back to their northern fastnesses. But no sooner had Constantine removed the seat of government to Constantinople, than the Western branch of the Empire was devoted to destruction. Franks, Goths, Vandals, Visigoths, Ostrogoths, Alans, Huns, Lombards, Danes, and Normans, successively swept like torrents over the most beautiful provinces of Europe. Nothing could resist their force, or check their headlong career. They carried everything before them. They conquered but to destroy. They demolished almost everything; for more than two centuries they built up nothing.

A DELUGE

From the year 400 to the year 600 was a sad period for Europe. The first conquerors did not occupy the soil which they had subdued; they pushed on to new conquests, or rather to new devastations. The territory they had last left was immediately invaded by another tribe more rapacious than themselves; and thus pushing each other on, as wave driving wave, they covered the face of Europe with the waters of a deluge of barbarism for centuries. It was only after the apparently inexhaustible population of the North had been almost drained, that the different tribes began to settle down permanently on the soil which they had hitherto only occasionally occupied.

BEAUTIFUL ITALY

Italy suffered most, as she was the favorite land with the Northmen; she was always aimed at because always beautiful,⁵ as an Italian orator lately said; there was scarcely a tribe, which did not trample down her lovely fields and rich vineyards. During the brief space of twenty years, Rome was taken by assault and pillaged five times! Yet a late American writer has well said:

AWFUL DEVASTATION

There was, in that period of general social dissolution one country, in which the work of devastation commenced much later, and ended much sooner. Italy in the Middle Ages was like Mt. Ararat in the Deluge—the last reached by the flood and the first left. The remains of the Roman social world were either never utterly dispersed in that country, or far later than anywhere else; and if we are to date the close of the Middle Ages from the extinction of feudalism, that revolution was effected in Italy no less than three centuries before the time of Charles V—the epoch assumed by Hallam, as the conclusion of his work. It would then, perhaps, be expedient to refer the history of Europe in the Middle Ages to Italy, as the history of the ancient world has always been referred to Rome. The great ascendancy of the Papal power, and the influence of Italian genius on the literature and the fine arts of all countries, made Italy essentially the center of light—the sovereign of thought—the Capital of Civilization!⁶

The justice of this tribute to Italy is confirmed by Hallam, who says:

It may be said with some truth, that Italy supplied the fire from which other nations in this first, as afterwards in the second era of the revival of letters, lighted their own torches. Lanfranc,

⁵ “*Sempre bersagliata, perche sempre bella.*”

⁶ *North American Review*, 1840—Art. “Hallam’s Middle Ages.”

Anselm, Peter Lombard, the founder of systematic theology in the twelfth century, Irnerius, the restorer of jurisprudence, Gratian, the author of the first compilation of Canon Law, the school of Salerno, that guided medical art in all countries, the first dictionaries of the Latin tongue, the first treatise of Algebra, the first great work that makes an epoch in Anatomy, are as truly and exclusively the boast of Italy, as the restoration of Greek literature and of classical taste in the fifteenth century.⁷

The Northmen not only arrested agriculture and pillaged cities, but they often destroyed libraries, and tore or defaced the finest monuments of literature and the arts. They spared nothing in their ruthless career of destruction. Occasionally, indeed, an Attila, calling himself "*the Scourge of God*," would pause with awe before a Leo the Great pleading with a divine energy, that his flock might be spared by the wolf; and even a Totila, the last ravager of Rome (A. D. 554) would quail before the humble sanctity of a Benedict; but these are only exceptions to a general rule. Even the monasteries, those sanctuaries of learning, though often spared, were sometimes pillaged and destroyed. The famous monastery of Monte Cassino, in Italy, to which even Totila had made a pilgrimage of reverence, was afterwards plundered by the Lombards (A. D. 580).

The confusion of society—the perpetual tumults which distracted Europe, the destruction of agriculture and manufactures, and the misery and wretchedness thereby induced—the tears and cries of the widow and orphan—and the other evils of that period, are feelingly deplored by contemporaneous

⁷ "Introduction to the Literature of Europe in the Fifteenth, Sixteenth, and Seventeenth Centuries"; 2 vols. 8vo—Harper's Edition, vol. i. p. 58.

writers. So great was the distress in Europe, that about the beginning of the tenth century, many believed the end of the world was at hand.

These causes seemed to act with but little intermission, until towards the end of the tenth century, or during a period of nearly 500 years. It required this long period to enable Europe to settle down, and to become adapted to the new order of things, brought about by a series of revolutions till then unparalleled in history.

In the midst of continual agitation and revolution, men could not find time to apply to the cultivation of letters. From necessity, their hands were better trained to the use of the sword than to that of the pen. From the continual devastation of wars, books, which could then be multiplied only by the copyist, became exceedingly scarce. The venerable Alexandrian library was destroyed by the Saracens in 641, and its fate was unhappily shared by many other valuable libraries in Europe. Books were so dear that they could be procured only by the wealthy, precisely because they had become so scarce. A memorable instance of this occurs in the case of the Duchess of Anjou, who for one copy of a book of Homilies, gave one hundred sheep and eighty bushels of wheat. The loan of books itself became sometimes a matter of diplomatic negotiation.

NEW DYNASTIES

Another fact must be kept in view. Not only did new dynasties arise on the ruins of previous institutions, but a new race peopled Europe, with new

manners, customs, laws, and religion; whilst the miserable remnant of the original population was reduced to a degrading vassalage. Who can wonder if under these circumstances literature declined? The great marvel is, that it was not entirely and forever prostrated. And but for the finger of God, acting through the divinely reactive energies of Catholic Christianity, we sincerely believe that this would have been the case.

CHRISTIANITY TRIUMPHANT OVER BARBARISM

Christianity was trampled in the dust by the armies of the infidel or semi-infidel⁸ Northmen, but her divine spirit was not subdued. She conquered like her Founder, by being seemingly conquered for a time, by death! She bent her heavenly form to the tempest, but did not quail under its violence; and when its utmost fury had been spent, she raised her head, and exhibited her divine countenance and heavenly features to the barbarians who held her captive; they paused, and—

God! how they admired her heavenly hue.⁹

They were stricken with awe, they reverently took off her chains, fell down before her, worshiped at her shrine, and swore eternal fidelity to her cause! Their enthusiasm was turned into another and better channel; and the subsequent history of Chivalry and the Crusades contains the record of its mighty results.

⁸ Some of the Northmen had been partially imbued with the Arian heresy.

⁹ Dryden's "Hind and Panther."

CIVILIZATION

After having subdued her conquerors by converting them, Christianity had to tame their ferocity, and gradually to civilize and enlighten them. And nobly did she accomplish these results. But she determined wisely to proceed gradually and slowly in the great work. She knew that all great beneficial changes, which are intended to affect whole masses, are slow and gradual in their operation, and that nothing which is violent is permanent. The sturdy oak, which has vanquished a thousand storms, has been for centuries acquiring its present firmness and solidity; while the earthquake and the tornado are the work of a moment.

LITERARY HISTORY

A striking confirmation of this principle is exhibited in the literary history of the Middle Ages. Letters continued to decline for nearly five hundred years, until they reached their lowest stage in the tenth century; and then they gradually improved for about the same period, until they arrived at their highest point, or zenith, in the golden age of Leo X, about the beginning of the sixteenth century.¹⁰ And this naturally leads us to the second point of our division, in which we will endeavor to give a rapid historical sketch of the various epochs of literature during the period in question.

¹⁰ Hallam thinks that "The seventh century is the nadir of the human mind in Europe," though he admits that in England the darkness was greatest in the tenth.—"Introduction," *sup. cit.* I, 26.

II. In the fall of Rome, and the establishment of the Gothic kingdom in Italy under Odoacer, in 476, literature received a heavy blow. Yet amidst the turmoil of war, and the storm of revolution, many were found in different parts of the fallen empire who devoted their time to letters.

In the sixth century, Vigilius Tapsensis wrote and published in Africa many works of considerable merit. Dionysius Exiguus, or the Little, became famous by inventing the Paschal Cycle, and settling the Christian era, about the year 516; and though his chronology has been thought to be slightly erroneous, yet it has been followed by all Christendom ever since his time. He was alike distinguished as an astronomer, historian, and theologian, and he would have reflected honor on any age. In the same century, Gregory of Tours wrote his "History of the Franks," which is the foundation of all early French history. Italy was rendered conspicuous in the same age by two names, illustrious in philosophy and polite learning: Cassiodorus and Boethius, both of noble family and senatorial rank, but more illustrious far by their piety and devotion to letters. The former, writing to the latter, praises him for having reestablished Greek learning in Italy, and for having translated, for the benefit of his countrymen, the works of Pythagoras, Ptolemy, Euclid, Plato, Aristotle and Archimedes.

About the middle of the seventh century (A. D. 669), Greek literature was introduced into England by Theodorus, the seventh Archbishop of Canterbury, himself a Greek. St. Gregory the Great, by his virtues, enlightened mind, and patronage of

learning, shone like a bright luminary in the center of Italy about the beginning of this century; while St. Isidore of Seville, by valuable works on almost every subject, laid open the treasures of learning to his countrymen in Spain. The compendious and encyclopedical character of his writing was well adapted to an age in which books were scarce, and could not be obtained without great difficulty. Towards the close of this century flourished the venerable Bede, the father of English history, whose name is in itself a sufficient eulogy. Beside his famous history, he wrote several works on grammar, music, arithmetic, and other branches. The monastery of Lindisfarne became, under him, a radiating point of literature to all Europe.

St. John of Damascus, who is considered by some as the reviver of the dialectic or Aristotelian method of reasoning, flourished in the eighth century. In the same age Paul, the Deacon, wrote his valuable history of the Lombards, and Paulinus of Aquileia published several Latin poems of respectable merit. The close of this century is famed for a praiseworthy effort made by the Emperor Charlemagne to stay the downward tendency of letters, and to infuse a new literary energy into Europe. Who has not heard of Alcuin, the learned English monk, employed by that great prince to carry into effect his intentions; of Peter the Deacon, of Pisa, his preceptor; of Eginhard, his secretary and historian; and of many others whom this munificent patron of letters attracted to his court? He established in his palace regular conferences on literary subjects among the literati whom he gathered around him, and thereby

laid the foundation of those academies and literary associations, which have subsequently done so much for the advancement of learning. Before the reign of Charlemagne, schools had been established in many of the monasteries and parishes in Italy, France, England, Ireland, Spain, and Germany; and he ordered by a public law, that seminaries of learning should be opened at every cathedral church throughout his vast empire.

Towards the close of the following century, a similar effort was made by Alfred the Great, of England, to reestablish learning in his kingdom. He was one of the most extraordinary men that ever lived. He fought fifty-four pitched battles, with various vicissitudes of fortune, and yet, whether in the camp or in his palace, he invariably devoted one-third of his time to prayer and study. He made a law, that every man who owned two hides of land should send his children to school until they were sixteen years of age, and that his sheriffs and officers should apply to letters, or quit their offices. He translated many works into his vernacular language, and wrote several poems.¹¹

It was the fate of the great men just named, to have their benevolent intentions in a great measure frustrated, by the imbecility and domestic feuds of their children and successors, and by the rude and evil nature of the times.

TENTH CENTURY

The tenth century is generally reputed the darkest of all the Middle Ages. It was natural that it should

¹¹ See Burke's Works, vol. ii, "Abridgment of English History."

be so. The causes which brought about the decline of letters had been steadily operating for nearly five hundred years; and during this century unhappy Europe, already scourged for long ages, and bleeding at every pore, was invaded in the North by the Danes, in the center by the Normans, and in the South by the Saracens. Yet even in this iron age there were many illustrious men: Otho the Great, of Germany, whose praises were celebrated in a Latin epic poem of some merit, still extant, by Roswida, a contemporary Saxon poetess; Ratherius and Luitprand of Italy, the latter of whom was a writer of considerable spirit and much wit, though his style is infected with much of the grossness of the age. Even during this century, the monks kept up their constant occupation of copying books; as is proved by the fact that when the Saracens took and pillaged a monastery, near Novara in the north of Italy, they found, among the works in its library, copies of Virgil, Horace and Cicero. The Poles, Hungarians, and a portion of the Russians, were also converted to Christianity during this century.

Hallam does not subscribe to the more generally received opinion, that the tenth was the least enlightened of the Middle Ages, at least so far as France and Germany are concerned. He says:

But, compared with the seventh and the eighth century, the tenth was an age of illumination in France. And Meiners, who judged the Middle Ages somewhat perhaps too severely, but with a penetrating and comprehensive observation, of which there had been few instances, had gone so far as to say, that "in no age, perhaps, did Germany possess more learned and virtuous Churchmen of the episcopal order, than in the latter half of the tenth and beginning of the eleventh century." Eichhorn points out indications of

a more extensive acquaintance with ancient writers in several French and German ecclesiastics of this period.¹²

GRADUAL REVIVAL

III. From the beginning of the eleventh century, the prospects of literature began to brighten. That and the following centuries could boast the names of Gerbert, Anselm, Lanfranc, St. Bernard, Alexander of Hales, Albertus Magnus, Roger Bacon, Scotus, and St. Thomas Aquinas. The last name alone would immortalize any age or country. How subtle and well-balanced the mind, how deep the research, how accurate the reasoning of Aquinas! In strength, depth, grasp, and clearness of mind, he was the equal, in many other respects he was the superior, of Lord Bacon and Sir Isaac Newton, the much vaunted giants of English scientific literature.

ITS CAUSES

The causes which brought about this favorable change in the literary condition of Europe are obvious. When, as above stated, she had been reduced to the lowest point of misery, a reaction was naturally expected. A practice, which obtained very extensively during that period, contributed much to bring about this reaction. Christians were in the habit of making pilgrimages to Rome and Jerusalem, to renew on the spots where they occurred a remembrance of the sufferings and triumphs of the Apostles, martyrs, and of the Great King of Martyrs. This custom

¹² "Introduction to Literature," etc., i, 28.

afforded the double advantage of causing men to visit or pass through places where literature was still cultivated, and of bringing them into more frequent contact with each other.¹³ Whatever brings the masses of mankind into continual intercourse, tends to elicit talent, to stimulate inquiry, and to promote learning. The law of physical nature—that inactivity produces disease, stagnation or death, and that motion promotes health, vigor and life—is true also of the moral and literary condition of mankind.

The pilgrimages paved the way for a series of great and mighty events, which aroused Europe from her lethargy, united all her jarring elements, and concentrated her energies on one great object. The Crusades did more than this. They broke down the feudal system, enlarged the boundaries of dynasties, and drained Europe of most of those fiery spirits, who were conspicuous for nothing but stirring up civil feuds, or causing open wars. They originated a spirit of enterprise, stimulated commerce, threw men on their own resources, and taught them how to make those resources available. The old adage that “necessity is the mother of invention” was never more fully verified, as we shall see in a subsequent part of this chapter. In a political point of view, the Crusades were equally advantageous. They were a decisive blow in the great struggle which continued for centuries, between barbarism and civilization, between Asia and Europe, between the Crescent and the Cross! When the heroes who fought under Godfrey de Bouillon

¹³ See Burke's works, *ibid.* ch. 2, v. 2. p. 514 *et seq.*

planted their glorious banner on the battlements of Jerusalem, in 1099, and made it float there triumphantly for nearly one hundred years, they planted a thorn in the side of Islamism, that did more perhaps than anything else to cripple that warlike monster, which was marching with giant strides, cimeter in hand, over the world, blighting and destroying everything in its course. The fall of Constantinople was thus retarded perhaps for centuries, and while the Mussulmans were engaged at home with the invaders of their own territory, the Christians of Europe had time to repose, and to prepare for the still coming struggle.

That master stroke of policy—that “carrying of the war into Africa”—will reflect immortal honor on the political wisdom and searching forecast of Gregory VII and Urban II, who planned and carried into execution those expeditions.¹⁴

GOLDEN AGE OF LEO X

The invention of the art of printing, by Guttenberg and Faust, in 1436; the munificent patronage of letters by the houses of Medici, of Este, and of Gonzaga, and by the Popes in Italy; the vast number of learned Greeks who fled to Europe on the taking of Constantinople by Mohammed II in 1453, and the welcome which these men received, especially in Italy, completed what the Crusades had begun.

¹⁴ That this motive was combined with the enthusiastic desire to recover the Holy Land, desecrated by the Mussulmans, is manifest from the Acts of the Council of Clermont in 1095, and from the speech of Urban II, in this council, which is a masterpiece of eloquence and political wisdom.

Literature progressed with giant strides in Italy, which had shone as a beacon light to the rest of Europe throughout the long period of the Middle Ages, and towards its close blazed up so brilliantly, as to excite the surprise, and to dazzle the eyes of mankind. There was a galaxy of genius in the golden age of Leo X, in the beginning of the sixteenth century—very properly styled the second Augustan Age of Roman literature.

But see each Muse in Leo's golden days
Starts from her trance, and trims her withered bays;
Rome's ancient genius o'er its ruins spread,
Shakes off the dust, and rears his rev'rend head.
Then sculpture and her sister arts revive,
Stones leaped to form, and rocks began to live.
With sweeter notes each rising temple rung;
A Raphael painted, and a Vida sung.
Immortal Vida! on thy honored brow,
The poet's bays and critic's ivy grow;
Cremona now shall ever boast thy name,
As next in place to Mantua, next in fame!

IV. Were the Middle Ages as *dark* as they are usually represented by Protestant historians? How much do we owe to that period? I might rather ask, what is there in literature and the arts that we do *not* owe to those Ages? We owe to them the ancient Grecian and Roman literature, which but for the care and indefatigable industry of men who deserve every praise, and who receive nought but sneers, would have been utterly and irretrievably lost, amidst the storms and revolutions which swept over Europe during the greater part of that period.

LATIN LANGUAGE IN LITURGY, AND THE MONASTIC
INSTITUTE

Two institutions of the Catholic religion greatly contributed to this happy result: the preservation of the Latin language in the public service, and the Monastic Orders. The former imposed upon all candidates for Orders the obligation of learning the Latin language and of studying the ancient Roman literature, and thereby afforded them a powerful inducement to preserve the masterpieces of Roman composition;¹⁵ while the latter opened sacred retreats and holy sanctuaries for learning, while the rude storm of war was sweeping over the world, destroying in mankind all relish for letters, and desolating the proudest monuments of literature and the arts.¹⁶ The monasteries were generally situated in remote solitudes, or amidst mountain rocks and torrents; they offered little inducement to the plunderer, besides being almost inaccessible to his clans. It was one of the stated rules of the Monks of St. Benedict, to devote a portion of their time to study and to copying books, and in the quietness of their cells, by their untiring industry, they preserved and transmitted to us the precious treasures of ancient classic literature. Enlightened men of every religious creed have done justice to the monks. And yet it is the fashion at the present day to sneer at these deserving men, in season and out of season; and every valiant knight, who, booted

¹⁵ See Burke's works, vol. 2, "Abridgment of Eng. History," c. 2, p. 514 *et seq.*

¹⁶ Burke, *ibid.*

and spurred, mounts his fiery Rosinante; and dashes in among the hooded monks of the Dark Ages, scattering them hither and yon, as he of La Mancha did the flock of sheep, thinks that he has achieved a brilliant exploit!

We have now before us a list of *twenty-five* great improvements and inventions, which we owe to those much abused Ages, many of them of vast and paramount importance to society.

ELEVATION OF WOMAN

1. At the head of the list deserves to be placed, on account of its great influence on modern refinement, the elevation of female character, for which we are mainly indebted to the chivalry of the Middle Ages. When the Northmen were converted to the Catholic Faith in the fifth and the following centuries, they learned, along with other teachings of Christianity, that the Saviour God whom they adored vouchsafed to be born of a woman, to call her *Mother*, and to be subject to her. The high honor thus divinely conferred upon *Mary*, was reflected from her upon her whole sex; just as the disobedience and consequent dishonor of Eve had bowed down woman to the dust, marked by the serpent's trail. The generous Northmen caught up at once this idea, so just and so beautiful, and their enthusiasm in honor of the sex was aroused. The principles of medieval chivalry were developed; but the feeling outstripped the principle, and woman suddenly found herself raised much above her true level in society, as she had hitherto been

degraded below it. The humble daughter of Mary was thus far exalted above the proud daughter of Eve. But the extravagant excesses of chivalrous devotion to the sex were curbed by the holy principles of religion; and the result of these elements and causes, is the station which woman now occupies in society. Under paganism she was the slave or toy of man; the creature of his caprice, or the victim of his tyranny. Even the more polished society of ancient Greece and Rome afforded but very imperfect exceptions to this remark. Thanks to Christianity and to the Middle Ages, she has ceased to be the slave, and has been made the companion of man: from being the drudge of society she has become its ornament and refiner.

The restoration of woman to her proper station in society had a powerful influence on civilization and literature. Even the extravagancies of chivalry had their beneficial results. Female influence not only prompted to deeds of valor, but also stimulated men to triumphs in poetry and literature; the delicate hands of woman wove not only the chaplet which decorated the warrior's brow, but also the laurel and the ivy wreath, which adorned the brow of genius.

Women did more at that period than exert a mere influence; they acted their own parts. Who has not heard of the famous Joan of Arc, the maid of Orléans who, at the tender age of seventeen, led the disheartened troops of France to deeds of heroic valor, retrieving the fortunes of her country conquered by a foreign foe; driving the English from more than half of France, and finishing her mission

by crowning Charles VII King of France, at Rheims, which but a few months previously was in the very heart of the territory conquered by the enemy? Nor are her laurels stained by the fact, that when taken by her enemies, she was, at the instigation of the Duke of Bedford, condemned and inhumanly burned as a sorceress and witch!¹⁷ Who has not heard of Queen Margaret of Sweden, the Semiramis of the North, who in the thirteenth century, by her political prowess, united all the jarring elements of northern Scandinavia into one vast kingdom? Or of Anna Comnena, the authoress of the famous Alexiad, in the twelfth century? Or of more than one lady who during that period taught philosophy and *belles lettres* in the University at Bologna¹⁸—not to mention Héloïse, skilled in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew learning, upon whose story many moderns have raised so many extravagant and ridiculous fictions?

MODERN LANGUAGES

2. We owe all our modern languages to the Middle Ages: the Italian, with its sweetness; the French, with all its grace and delicacy; the Spanish, with its stern dignity; the German and English with all their force and richness. The Italian may be considered as the first daughter of the Latin, the most soft and comely; the French as the second daughter, less fair than her elder sister, but pos-

¹⁷ Twenty years afterwards, in 1451, Pope Calixtus III had her sentence revoked, and pronounced her a patriot and martyr.

¹⁸ The most famous of these *femmes savantes*, were Modesta di Pozzo, Cassandra Fidele, Isabella di Cordova, Isabella de Roseres, Catharine Ribera, and Aloysia Sigea.—(See Robelot, *Influence de la Reformat.* p. 339).

sessed of more tact and more varied graces; and the Spanish, not as the *daughter*, but as the *son*, of the Latin, with the stern features and manly voice of the parent. It is a matter of surprise, how languages so beautiful and perfect could have sprung from amidst the constant turmoil and confusion of those Ages; and especially, how the Italian, so sweet and musical, could have resulted from the union of the Latin, itself not remarkable for sweetness, with the harsher sounds of the North. We are forcibly reminded of a fable in heathen mythology—as the Cytherean Venus, the *beau idéal* of ancient perfection in beauty, was fabled to have sprung from the froth of the sea; so the Italian, the softest and most beautiful of modern languages, may be said to have sprung, in all its symmetry and beauty of form, from the froth of a sea agitated by continued storms and revolutions.

Whatever theory we may adopt on the question, whether language be a Divine gift, or merely a human invention, or a result of both agencies combined, there can be no doubt as to the merit which attaches to its full development and cultivation. A rich, strong, precise, or melodious language indicates corresponding qualities in the people who employ it as a medium of thought; and we know of no instance in which a fully developed and highly cultivated language does not betoken a refined literary taste.

POETRY

3. We owe all our modern poetry, and also the introduction of rhythm into poetry, to those Ages.

Italy, as usual, led the way. The rude laws of the Troubadours, in the twelfth, prepared the world for the *Divina Commedia* of Dante, in the thirteenth century. His effusions were followed by the noble strains of Petrarch, who was crowned with laurel at Rome in the fourteenth century. The English poet Chaucer was the friend, but by no means the equal of Petrarch; his taste was often vitiated by too great attachment to the rhymes of the Troubadours, and he imitated too servilely his great Italian contemporary.

PAPER

4. The paper upon which we write was invented in the Middle Ages. From ancient MSS. it appears that cotton paper was used in Italy as early as the tenth century, while linen paper seems to have been introduced in the fourteenth.¹⁹ We now reap the fruits of an invention, which has made the material upon which we write and print so cheap, as to be accessible to all. Before the invention of paper, parchment, and papyrus, the latter an article manufactured from a plant in Egypt, were chiefly used; but they were both rare and expensive. When the Saracens overran Egypt, in 641, the importation of papyrus into Europe seems to have ceased; and, to the inventive genius of the Italians, thus thrown on their own resources, we owe the present material, superior to it in every respect.

¹⁹ This date for the invention of linen paper is assigned by Tira-boschi. Hallam fixes it earlier—in 1100.—“Introduction,” 1, 50, *supra cit.*

ART OF PRINTING

5. The glory of having invented the art of printing, also belongs to the period of which we are speaking. I allude not only to the art as invented by Guttenberg or Faust, in 1436, at Strasburg and Metz, but also to an invention of a much earlier date, which was only extended and improved by the persons above named. I mean the invention of *Chirotypography*, or printing by hand, of which undoubted traces are found in many ancient diplomas, as old as the tenth century, and in some illuminated works of equal antiquity, hitherto viewed as manuscripts. A learned Italian, the Abbate Requeno, in a work published a few years since at Rome, has amply established this fact; of which, however, I have been unable to find mention in any work of standard English literature—and yet it is fashionable for our standard writers to sneer at the ignorance of the Italians, though to them literature certainly owes more than to any other nation. Requeno proves that two kinds of hand printing were in use—the impression was sometimes taken by plates with letters carved on them, sometimes by movable types of wood, or ivory, or metal. Only one step was wanting to render this invention valuable, and to multiply copies—the *press*; and Guttenberg made this step. It should be recollected, however, that it is easy to add to inventions already made: *facile est inventis addere*. It is a remarkable fact, in both stages of the history of this invention, that the first mode adopted was that which afterwards constituted the highest perfection in the art;

viz., the use of stereotype plates, which Guttenberg abandoned in favor of movable types, because he knew of no way of casting the former, to render them available.

ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

6. The illuminated manuscripts of the Middle Ages show that the art of penmanship was then carried to a degree of perfection, which it has never since attained. Who that has seen those manuscripts, has not admired their splendid pictorial illustrations, their taste and exquisite beauty! The use of gold and silver ink, seems also to have been common at that period; and in the Vatican library, at Rome, there is preserved a splendid illuminated manuscript copy of the New Testament in Greek, as old as the eleventh century, and written entirely in letters of gold! I doubt whether our modern artists could produce anything equal, or even similar to this splendid specimen of art.

UNIVERSITIES .

7. Universities were first founded in those Ages. To them we owe the two great English universities; Oxford, founded in 886 by Alfred the Great, and Cambridge in 915²⁰; the famous University of Paris, said to have been first established by Charlemagne, about the year 800²¹; and the perfect galaxy of

²⁰ Some writers believe that the schools founded by Alfred did not become universities until some time in the twelfth century. See Hallam, "Introduction to the Literature of Europe," vol. 1, p. 32.

²¹ The same remark may be made in regard to this famous school, which, though claimed to have been founded by Charlemagne, did

Italian universities, at Rome, Bologna, Padua, Pavia, and Pisa, which became famous in the twelfth and following centuries, and which counted their students not by hundreds, but by thousands. The University of Padua, the *alma mater* of Christopher Columbus and *Americus Vespuccius*, is said to have contained, at one time no less than 18,000 students. The University of Oxford contained, in the thirteenth century, according to the testimony of its historian Anthony Wood, a Protestant, no less than 30,000 students.²²

SCHOOLS OF LAW AND MEDICINE

The Pandects of Justinian were discovered in the eleventh century: and the study of the civil and Canon Law was shortly after revived by the famous Irnerius or Werner, in the University of Bologna. Youths from all parts of Europe frequented this and the other Italian universities, and returned to their native countries, to diffuse among their countrymen the stores of knowledge they had thus accumulated. Italy thus became the radiating point of literature to all Europe, and her universities contributed, perhaps as much as any other cause, to the revival of learning and to the march of civilization. The University of Paris deserves great praise for having contributed its full portion to the good work. Medical schools were also established at Salerno, in the south of Italy, in the eleventh century (some say the

not probably acquire a charter of rights as a university, until about two centuries later. See Hallam, *ibid.* p. 30.

²² *Athenæ Oxonienses.*

seventh), and at Montpellier and Paris, in the twelfth; and thus the science of medicine was revived. In all these improvements, the monks acted a very conspicuous part.

In concluding this subject, I will remark, that of the two English universities, Oxford has five halls and twenty colleges, and that *all her halls*, and twelve of her colleges, were founded and endowed before the year 1516! Cambridge has seventeen colleges, of which twelve were founded before 1511—from which fact it would appear that, notwithstanding all our boasting, the *Dark Ages* have done more for literature than a more *enlightened* period!

MUSICAL NOTES, ORGANS, BELLS

8. Who is so dull of ear, as not to be delighted with the harmony of musical sound? We owe to the *Dark Ages*, an invention unknown to the ancients, by which music has become a science, taught upon regular principles. Guido of Arezzo, an Italian monk, by inventing the notes of the *gamut*, in 1124, did for music, what the inventor of alphabets did for language—reduced sounds to simple and systematic rules. He also invented many musical instruments, such as the cymbal and heptachord. While on this subject, we may remark, that organs were either invented in Italy, or at least introduced into Europe by the Italians, in the eighth century; and that the use of bells in churches may be dated back to the year 605 of the Christian era.

MARINER'S COMPASS

9. But we are indebted to those abused Ages, for another invention, which has perhaps had as great an influence as any other in advancing the cause of civilization, and extending the boundaries of human knowledge. And it is in consequence of this invention that we tread the soil of this vast continent, which but for it, would never probably have been discovered by the civilized world. We mean the mariner's compass. The precise date of this invention is not known; but it is spoken of by French and Italian writers in the twelfth century. The Amalfites, enterprising mariners in the south of Italy, seem to have been the first to apply it to navigation.

The invention at its first stage was rude and simple enough. The magnetized needle was placed in a vessel of water, upon pieces of straw or two split sticks; and it was evidently of little use when a vessel was agitated by a rough sea. About the close of the thirteenth century, Flavio di Gioja, an Italian of Pasitano, a village near Amalfi, devised a method by which this inconvenience was obviated: he suspended the needle on a pivot placed at its center, and it thus became available under all circumstances. The box, with the points of the Compass marked on its rim, was added, and thus the invention was completed, though it was subsequently much improved. The *fleur-de-lis* is said to have been placed at the North Pole, in honor of the royal house of France, which then controlled the government of Naples, whose subject di Gioja was.

The ancients knew something of the loadstone, but never thought of applying it to navigation. Some writers, whose spirit leads them to detract as much as possible from Christian nations, and to give the merit of everything to pagans, have contended that the Chinese invented the mariner's compass. It is, however, certain, from the letters of the earliest missionaries to China, that the species of compass formerly used by the Chinese was entirely different from our magnetic needle. And if we consider the truly wonderful progress which this *very enlightened* people have since made in navigation, with their beautiful junks, as broad as they are long, plowing the deep, we will certainly feel disposed to award them every honor and glory; especially as they make themselves some thousands of years older than the world!

GEOGRAPHICAL DISCOVERIES

10. The invention just mentioned led to other great improvements. The frequent and extensive voyages undertaken by Italian navigators, greatly increased the amount of geographical knowledge. The travels of Rubruquis, and Marco Polo, the famous Venetian navigator, as well as the written account of the Catholic missionaries, who, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, penetrated into the very heart of Asia, threw additional light upon the history, manners and customs, and geography of those distant nations. From the ancient map made by Marco Polo, and recently published, with learned essays, by the late Cardinal Zurla, it appears

manifest that Polo doubled the Cape of Good Hope, and visited Madagascar. The Canary Islands were also discovered by the Portuguese, in the thirteenth century. Thus was the way prepared for the discovery of America by Columbus, in 1492.

COMMERCE

11. Commerce was also carried on with spirit and vigor from about the same time, and the products of the whole world flowed into Europe. Italy here also led the way. The Venetian, Genoese, and Pisan republics carried on an extensive trade with Asia and Egypt. The Venetians, from the year 1096, the era of the first crusade, became the carriers of Europe. Another powerful commercial league sprang up in the thirteenth century, in the north-western part of Europe. The Hanseatic league, which began in 1241, with the two cities of Hamburg and Lübeck, comprised in 1370 no less than sixty-four cities and forty-four allies.

FIRST BANK

12. The first bank was founded at Venice in the year 1157. To facilitate commercial intercourse, bills of exchange (*lettere di cambio*) were also introduced into Italy about the same time.

POST-OFFICE, NEWSPAPERS

13. The increased intercourse among mankind for commercial purposes, and the necessity of carrying

on regular correspondence with distant persons, suggested the idea of a post-office. We read that the University of Paris, and the Italian universities, as early as the twelfth century, established regular *couriers* through all parts of Europe, for the purpose of enabling the students to correspond with their parents, and to collect money to pay their expenses. Such was the humble commencement of an institution, which has since been so far extended and perfected, as to ramify throughout the whole world, and to furnish a regular medium of intercourse for the more distant nations. We may here remark, *en passant*, that the first newspapers were published in Venice, in 1562.

SPECTACLES

14. We also owe to the period of which we are speaking, an invention which enables old persons to read, and prevents those who are afflicted with shortsightedness from falling into many disasters, which would otherwise beset this afflicted class of human beings. Spectacles for the old and shortsighted were first constructed by Salvino, a monk of Pisa, in Italy, in 1285. Some writers award the merit of this invention to the famous English monk, Roger Bacon. It is, however, probable, that he never constructed spectacles; though in his *Opus Majus* he certainly explains the principle upon which they should be made. He also unfolds the principle of the telescope, microscope and magic lantern; and he speaks of a certain inextinguishable fire, which is generally understood to mean phosphorous. In

the same work he speaks of a certain composition of saltpeter, sulphur, and charcoal, which would imitate the sound and brilliancy of thunder and lightning, and one square inch of which ignited would destroy a whole army or city. Hence some have considered him the inventor of

GUNPOWDER

15. Gunpowder, of which he certainly had a clear idea. It is, however, probable that his knowledge was confined to theory and a few experiments.²³ Schwartz, a monk of Cologne, seems to have been the first who manufactured gunpowder, about the year 1320. Cannons were used in the battles of Crécy and Poictiers, towards the close of the fourteenth century. If the Chinese historians deserve any credit, the celestial empire had the merit of inventing gunpowder long before this world was made! As early as the year 688, a composition, called the *Greek fire*, was employed by the Orientals, especially in sea fights: but all agree that it was not *our* gunpowder. A work is still preserved in the University of Oxford, England, written in the ninth century by one Gracchus, who describes a compound nearly resembling that of which we are treating.

No invention has perhaps exerted a more powerful, and I believe a more beneficial influence on the destinies of the world, than that of this terrific agent. It has entirely changed the aspect of war. It has affected fortification, ship building, and has wholly changed military tactics. Besides its beneficial influence on

²³ He died in 1292.

internal improvements, it has, strange to say, softened and mitigated the horrors of war, and greatly diminished the number of those who fall in battle. Armies formerly engaged in mortal combat face to face, and fought for whole days, often returning to the combat, nor was victory obtained until one or the other army was nearly annihilated; men now fight at a distance, and the contest is soon decided. Thousands fell formerly, where hundreds fall now. Compare any great ancient battle with any decisive modern engagement, and you will be convinced of the truth of this remark. Take for example two of the most decisive engagements recorded in history: the Battle of Waterloo, and that between Poictiers and Tours in 732, when Charles Martel defeated the Saracens. In the former, the total amount of killed and wounded on both sides was about 55,000, of whom perhaps not half were killed; whereas in the latter the Saracens alone had 100,000—some say 300,000 killed.

STONE COAL

16. Stone coal, which has since proved so extensively useful, in private residences and in factories, was discovered in England in 1307.

ARITHMETICAL NUMBERS, ALGEBRA

17. The Arabian arithmetical numbers were introduced into Europe by the famous Gerbert, afterwards Pope Sylvester II, about the year 991. Thus the foundation of arithmetic was laid, and the science

of mathematics began from this time to be extensively studied.²⁴ Algebraic calculation was also introduced into Europe by the Italians, in 1412.

GLASS

18. Though the ancient Greeks and Romans were acquainted with glass, yet they seem never to have used it in windows. This improvement in the comforts of life was generally adopted in Europe in the Middle Ages. The first mention of glass windows occurs in writers of the third and fourth century.

STAINED GLASS

19. A method of staining glass was generally known and employed during that period, which has since been lost. Efforts were made during the last century in Germany and France to revive this beautiful art, but with very imperfect success. The solemn and mellow light of the old Gothic churches, which tends to inspire us with pensive, yet pleasing emotions, is owing to the use in them of stained glass.

²⁴ The Arabians have the credit of these inventions. They also excelled in medicine. They learned much from the works of the ancient Greek authors, whom this active and enterprising people translated. This is about all that can be said in favor of the literature of the fanatical followers of Mohammed, at least in its relation to the European literature of the Middle Ages. Yet some authors would wish to convey the impression that what we do not owe to the Chinese, we have derived from the Arabs!

AGRICULTURE

20. The chief sufferings of Europe during the Middle Ages grew out of the neglect of agriculture. The monks applied themselves early to this useful art, and taught others how to practice it. The monasteries were generally situated in remote and desert places; the monks reclaimed the soil, drained the marshes, fertilized even the rocky mountain tops, and improved whole districts. They also taught the people other useful arts. Thus, when the people of Sussex in England were perishing with hunger during a famine, in the seventh century, Bishop Wilfrid at the head of his monks, plunged into the sea in presence of the assembled multitudes, and thus opened to them a new source of subsistence, of which their ignorance or druidical superstitions had hitherto deprived them.²⁵

BOTANY

21. The monks also cultivated botany, and studied the medical qualities of plants. The clergy were in many places the only physicians. It is a remarkable feature in that age, that every pursuit was referred to, or connected with, religion. The names of flowers were taken from some supposed aptitude to recall religious reminiscences. The passion-flower, the marygold, and others are examples of this. How beautiful and poetical the turn of thought, which suggested the idea of the floral calendar, by which the plants, in their different times of flowering,

²⁵ See Burke's Works, vol. ii, p. 514, *et seq.*

marked the division of time, and pointed to the holy festivals of religion! This was truly giving to the flowers a *language*, which spoke of God and His Saints—of religion—of heaven!

What a lovely thought to mark the hours,
As they floated in light away;
By the opening and the folding flowers,
That laugh unto the summer's day!

CLOCKS

22. The clock was invented in the Middle Ages. The invention is prior to the twelfth century, though the author of it is not clearly known. The phrase, "the clock has struck," was common in the twelfth century. Some award the honor of the invention to the famous Gerbert, already mentioned, who certainly put up a clock for Otho the Great, at Magdeburg, about the year 1000. Others ascribe it to the Italian monk Pacificus, and others to the Abbot William, of Hirschau in Germany. It is probable that they all contributed their share to the invention, at nearly about the same time. It is a remarkable fact in the history of human knowledge, that in its progress many learned men in different places hit simultaneously upon the same invention. Every scholar has heard of the controversies between the friends of Galileo and Huygens about the application of the *pendulum* to clocks; between Newton and Hook and the Bernouillies, about the first discoverer of the laws of attraction; and between Newton and Leibnitz about the authorship of the *fluxional* or *integral calculus*. Before the invention of clocks, the sun-dial, the hour-glass, and the Clepsydron,

constructed on the principle of water dripping through a small orifice, were the only instruments used for measuring time.

PAINTING REVIVED

23. In the thirteenth century, painting was revived in Italy by Giunta of Pisa, Guido of Sienna, and the great Cimabue of Florence. Thus was commenced that great Italian school of painting, which afterwards produced a Raphael, a Titian, a Michael Angelo, a Domenichino, a Hannibal Caracci, and a Leonardo da Vinci.

SILK INTRODUCED

24. Silk was almost unknown to the ancients. Among the unpardonable extravagances of the Roman Emperor Heliogabalus, in the third century (A. D. 222), historians enumerate his having had a garment entirely of silk! The silk worm was brought from the East Indies or China to Constantinople in 552, and the Italians first introduced its culture into Europe in the twelfth century. Roger, King of Sicily, deserves to be mentioned, as the first who called the attention of Europe to this subject. The silk manufacturers of Italy, France, and Flanders flourished to a wonderful extent in the thirteenth and following centuries, and the beautiful specimens of gold lace, and splendidly flowered and variegated silks of that period, equal, if they do not surpass, anything of the present enlightened days. Many of them may be seen in the old cathedrals and museums of Europe.

GOTHIC STYLE OF ARCHITECTURE, LEANING TOWER OF PISA

25. Those Ages had the merit of originating and carrying to the greatest perfection, a new style of Architecture. Who has not admired the splendid specimens of Gothic architecture still visible throughout Europe; specimens which, even in the ruins, which the fanatical vandalism of the sixteenth century has left of many of them, in England, Ireland and Scotland, are imposing still! How massive, and yet how light, is that order of architecture. How complicated the parts, and yet how simple the effect of the whole! The massive walls and the vast pilasters, as well as the pointed arch, the delicate creeper, the clustered column, and the fairy tracery—all contribute their parts to the effect. Take for example, the famous cathedral of Pisa, with its leaning tower, or rather the latter only. Can modern skill and architecture rear a pile like that: upwards of 200 feet high, six stories high besides the basement and pinnacle, with 209 beautiful marble columns encircling it, and leaning between fifteen and twenty feet from the perpendicular! It was built by William of Norimberg and Bonanno of Pisa, in the twelfth century, and has been standing for more than six hundred years.

CONCLUSION

Let men of the present day build an edifice like this; let it stand six hundred years, and then, if it be still firm and uninjured, they may sneer at the darkness of the Middle Ages!

CHAPTER III

LITERATURE AND THE CATHOLIC CLERGY

WHAT HAVE THE CATHOLIC CLERGY, AND ESPECIALLY THE MONKS DONE FOR LITERATURE?

MODERN HISTORY UNFAIR

SINCE the time of the self-called Reformation, the very fountains of history have been polluted. Writers with violent prejudices have been too much in the habit of viewing the history of the good old Catholic times through the gross and distorting medium of their preconceived opinions; and the result has been, that the pictures they have drawn of those times have scarcely one light or shade true to nature. So false are these, in fact, and so hideously deformed, "*Ut nec caput, nec pes uni reddatur formæ*"—"Nor head, nor foot is placed aright."

A GREAT CONSPIRACY AGAINST THE TRUTH

Without taking the trouble to consult the original documents, they have, in most cases, blindly and servilely copied one another's statements; and thus error has been perpetuated from generation to generation. The public taste in regard to everything

Catholic has been so long, and so deeply, and so widely vitiated, that it requires some moral courage nowadays to depart from the beaten track of error, and to tell the whole truth, according to the records of faithful history. The man who undertakes this laudable task, runs the risk of having his production treated with neglect by the community, and abandoned to the moth and dust of some neglected shelf. Books, to be purchased and read, must pander to popular prejudice; and hence it is that the infection has spread so widely. Avarice in book-makers and book-publishers has been a fruitful source of historical errors, and consequent popular deceptions.

To convince ourselves that this is not an exaggerated or unfair statement, we have only to open any of our works of popular literature, in the English language. From the primer and first books of history taught in our preparatory academies, up to works on philosophy and science used in our colleges, almost all are tainted with this stain of prejudice. It is the seasoning which gives them zest. Perhaps, too, just to infuse into the tender minds of children a holy horror of "Popery," the pages of school-books will be occasionally adorned with *beautifully executed* wood cuts, representing some scene of horror, in which priests and monks are exhibited as exulting over the agony of tortured victims! "Popish cruelty, monkish ignorance and superstition, the tyranny, the corruptions and abominations of the Church of Rome, the poor priest-ridden people, the avaricious exactions of the Popes"—and a thousand such malicious exhibitions of cant, crowded together often without measure or

reason—meet our wearied eye at every page. It is unhappily but too true, then, as the accomplished de Maistre has well said, that during the last three hundred years, history has become a great conspiracy against truth. This is especially the case with historical works written in the English language, in which, as William Cobbett has bluntly, but truly said, “there are more lies than in books written in all other languages put together.”

WHENCE THIS UNFAIRNESS IN ENGLISH WRITERS?

Whence this combination against truth among English writers? Whence this deep and abiding prejudice against Catholicity, transmitted as a fatal and poisoned heritage from England to America? To detect its source, we need only glance at the history of the so-called Reformation in England.

ROBBERY AND SACRILEGE

At the beginning of this revolution, the Catholic Church was immensely rich. The property of the churches and of the monasteries had been accumulated during centuries of Catholic charity and liberality. The Church, however, held it only in trust, for the benefit of the public, and especially of the poor. It had been bestowed for this special purpose. The Catholic bishops and clergy, having no families to provide for, naturally left their property to the Church, or for charitable purposes. The spirit, and even the letter, of the Canon Law compelled them to do this. The poor were thus supported out of a

fund, which the piety of ages had created for their benefit. There was then little pauperism, and there were no poor laws in England. The charity and the liberality of the Catholic Church, which was ever the tender mother of the poor, supplied the place of legal enactments and of heavy taxation for their support. Well, when the storm of the Reformation broke over England, this vast property was seized upon by the officials of Henry VIII, who pounced upon it, as a falcon on its prey. It exchanged hands. It was violently torn from the Church and from the poor, and given to the courtiers and *courtesans*. In one instance, Henry VIII gave a church estate to a woman, who had made a pudding to suit his royal taste! Sir Miles Partridge won a ring of church bells from him, by a throw of the dice! During his reign, and that of his son and successor, Edward VI, the work of sacrilegious spoliation was begun and consummated.

ORIGIN OF MODERN MAMMONISM

The Church was thus violently robbed, and her property, diverted from its proper channel of public charity and utility, went to enrich the spoilers, who fattened upon the bounty of a court whose vices they flattered. Avarice was thus seated, in sacrilegious triumph, on the altars which it had stripped and desecrated. And it has been the besetting sin of the world ever since the Reformation. It is the image, in fact, stamped upon the minds and characters of mankind by this violent revolution. We refer those who may think this picture exaggerated, to the

acts of Parliament, and to the statute book of England.¹

PERSECUTION OF SLANDER

Can we wonder that those, who thus became enriched with the spoils of the Church, should have labored to asperse the character of her ministers, who were the previous holders of the property? It is a principle of perverse human nature, *to hate those whom we have injured*; and the spirit of English Protestant writers, in regard to the Catholic Church, exhibits a frightful carrying out of this wicked maxim. Add to this, that, for nearly two hundred years after the Reformation, the Catholic press was gagged in England, and the English Catholics themselves, and especially their natural defenders, the clergy, were subjected to a most cruel persecution; and you have a full solution of the whole problem—a satisfactory reason, drawn from the nature and facts of the case, for this widespread, unchecked, and long-continued persecution of slander against Catholics, and against everything Catholic. In shaking off the yoke of English tyranny, what a pity that we did not throw off also the more galling yoke of English prejudice! Alas! instead of ridding themselves of this thraldom likewise, our country-

¹ William Cobbett has triumphantly established all this and much more: and his two volumes containing "The History of the Reformation in England," though the spirit they breathe might have been less harsh, have never been answered, for the very obvious reason that the facts they disclose are wholly unanswerable. The second volume contains an elaborate catalogue of the church and monastic property that was seized on or destroyed; the rental of which he estimates at one-third that of the entire kingdom.

men have courted it rather, and have delighted even to chew the rejected cud of English bigotry!

As the world advances in knowledge, and as mankind become calmer and more earnest in their inquiries after truth, it is to be hoped that a better spirit will dawn, and that the clouds, which now envelop modern history, will be dissipated.

We propose, in this paper, to lend our humble aid to the bringing about of this blessed consummation, by briefly showing what the Catholic clergy, and especially the monks, did for literature before the dawn of the Reformation, *so called*. And that our readers may the more readily follow our line of illustration, we will first show what enlightened Protestant writers have testified on the subject; and secondly, we will endeavor to prove, from original documents, that the judgment of these distinguished Protestants is based on the genuine facts of history.

WHAT PROTESTANTS HAVE SAID IN FAVOR OF THE MONKS LEIBNITZ

I. Amidst the dark and cloudy night of Protestant prejudice against the Catholic Church, the attentive observer may notice here and there, in the openings of the clouds, a star brightly glimmering, and filling his bosom with hope. The great Leibnitz was one of those "bright, particular stars." His vast and luminous mind not only led him to eschew prejudice, but conducted him to the very portals of the sublime temple of Catholic truth.² To understand his testimony, we must remark, that the Abbé de Rancé, the

² In his *Systema Theologicum*, which the writer of this paper pos-

founder of the Order of Trappists in France, was opposed to the special cultivation of literature by the monks of his Order. He wished them rather to spend their time in prayer, and in agricultural pursuits. His opinion was singular, and in fact unprecedented in monastic history, as we trust to make appear in the course of this chapter. The learned Benedictine, Mabillon, entered the lists, and in a very learned and able work on "Monastic Studies,"³ completely demolished the position of his adversary. Leibnitz, adverting to the same opinion, says: "If that opinion had obtained, we would have no erudition at the present day. For it is manifest that both books and letters have been preserved by the aid of the monasteries."⁴ He instances the famous monastery of Corbeia, "which, through its monks, excelling not less in learning than in piety, spread the light of the faith throughout the entire north" of Europe.⁵

ELLENDORF

To this splendid testimony in favor of the monks, we add that of Ellendorf, another distinguished German Protestant. He testifies that, "without the clergy, and chiefly without the monks, we would not

sesses, in German and Latin, this great Protestant philosopher explains and defends almost every doctrine of the Catholic Church. The work was published after his death, and its authenticity is unquestioned.

³ *De Studiis Monasticis*, vol. i, 4to.

⁴ "Si ea invaluisset opinio, nullam *hodie* eruditionem haberemus. Constat enim libros et literas monasteriorum opes fuisse conservatos." —Tom. v, *Opp. Ep.* 14.

⁵ "Quæ, monachis doctrina non minus quam pietate *præstantibus*, fidei lumen per totum septentrionem sparsit." —*Ibid.*

have now the works of the Fathers, nor of the classics.”⁶ We might also, were it deemed necessary, add the testimonies of Voigt, of Hurter,⁷ and of many other late German Protestant writers. Their works are comparatively recent and are well known to the learned; and besides, the passages from their writings which would illustrate our subject, are too numerous and too copious to find a place in a paper which must be necessarily brief. Thus the first part of Europe which rebelled against Catholicity, was also the first to do it a measure of justice.

EDMUND BURKE

RAISING UP THE LOWLY

Turn we now to England, of which we may say with some truth, what St. Leo the Great said in substance of pagan Rome: that she has afforded an asylum to sects of every hue, and has patronized and defended the errors of all innovators. One of the most accomplished Protestant writers, Edmund Burke, in his “Abridgment of English History,”⁸ bears abundant testimony to the services which the English monks of the “*Dark*” Ages rendered to Literature and to civilization. He proves that, besides copying books and gratuitously teaching the poor in their schools, they instructed the people in agriculture, in the art of fishing, and in various other useful occupations. A desire of the people’s wel-

⁶ *De Hierarchia*, tom. i, c. 4.

⁷ He has since become a fervent Catholic.

⁸ See his works, in three volumes, octavo. Vol. ii, ch. ii, p. 514 *et seq.*

fare appeared in all their actions. When they received large donations of lands, they immediately baptized and manumitted their new vassals. Thus, Baptism, in their eyes, broke the bonds of the slave, and restored him to freedom.⁹ By pursuing this enlightened course, the monks greatly contributed to the destruction of serfism, a species of domestic servitude, which was a part of the older feudal system; and they raised up the lower orders in the scale of society. To the spirit of the Catholic Church, thus acting through them, and through various other mediums, is Europe mainly indebted for her present civilization, one important element of which was the abolition of serfism.

GIVING ASYLUM TO THE OPPRESSED

In enjoining penance on the great and the rich, they frequently recommended works of public utility: "Let him also repair the church of God; let him improve the public roads, and build bridges over deep waters and muddy places; let him manumit his own serfs, and pay for the ransom of those of others, so that these may enjoy liberty."¹⁰ The monks were also austere and exemplary in their morals, spreading the "sweet odor of Christ" around their humble sphere of life, and rendering virtue lovely in the eyes of the people. They were disinterested and free from the stain of avarice.

⁹ Spellman Council, p. 329; cited by Burke, *ibid.*

¹⁰ *Instauret etiam Dei ecclesiam, et instauret vias publicas, pontibus super aquas profundas, et super cœnosas vias; et manumittat servos suos proprios, et redimat ab aliis hominibus servos suos ad libertatem.*
—L. Edgari, c. 14. *Apud* Burke, *ibid.*

“So free,” says the venerable Bede, “were the priests of that time from avarice, that they would not accept of landed property, unless through compulsion.”¹¹ Finally, according to Burke, in those ages of disorder and civil feud, the monasteries were places of secure refuge for the afflicted and the oppressed. When hunted down by their oppressors, these could fly to the monasteries, which were sacred asylums, respected even by the most lawless. It was the same, by God’s express appointment, under the old law, which provided certain cities of refuge for the forlorn outcast.

BISHOP TANNER

The English Protestant Bishop, Tanner, has written a work expressly on the monastic institutions of England and Wales.¹² In the preface to this book, he bears unequivocal testimony to the literary merit and moral worth of the monks of England. “In every great abbey,” says he, “there was a large room called the *Scriptorium*, where several writers made it their whole business to transcribe books for the use of the library. They sometimes, indeed, wrote the ledger books of the house, and the Missals, and other books used in divine service; but they were generally upon other works: the Fathers, classics, histories, etc.”¹³

¹¹ “*Adeo enim sacerdotes illius temporis erant ab avaritia immunes, ut nec territoria nisi coacte acciperent.*”—Beda, lib. iii, c. 26.

¹² “An Account of all the Abbeys, Priories, and Friaries, formerly existing in England and Wales.”—Referred to by Cobbett in his fourth Letter, Nos. 132, *et seq.*

¹³ Preface, p. 19, *et seq.*

He proceeds to state that John Whethampstead, Abbot of St. Albans, caused eighty books to be thus transcribed; and that fifty-eight were written out by the care of the Abbot of Glastonbury. He says: “In all the greater abbeys, there were persons appointed to take notice of the principal occurrences of the kingdom, and, at the end of the year, to digest them into annals.” The acts of Parliament and of ecclesiastical councils, as well as the great charters of rights, were sent to these abbeys for registration and safe-keeping.¹⁴ Magna Charta was preserved in them. The monasteries “were schools of learning and education; for every convent had one person or more appointed for this purpose; and all the neighbors that desired it, might have their children taught grammar and church music, *without any expense to them*. In the nunneries, also, young women were taught to work, and to read English, and sometimes Latin also. So that not only the lower rank of people, who could not pay for their learning, but most of the noblemen’s and gentlemen’s daughters were educated in those places.”¹⁵

We are constrained to omit several other passages, in which the Anglican Bishop bears willing testimony to the monasteries of England, as hospitals for the poor—as houses of free entertainment for all travelers—as places of great advantage to the common people living in their vicinity, by making them easy tenants, and by furnishing a ready market for whatever they were able to produce on the soil—and finally, as great architectural ornaments of the country.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

MALLET

To this unexceptional testimony of an English Protestant Bishop, we add the following Protestant evidence on the same subject. Mallet, the historian of Switzerland, says: “The monks softened by their instructions the ferocious manners of the people, and opposed their credit to the tyranny of the nobility, who knew no other occupation than war, and grievously oppressed their neighbors. On this account the government of monks was preferred to theirs. The people sought them for judges. It was an usual saying, that *‘It was better to be governed by a bishop’s crozier, than by the monarch’s scepter.’*”¹⁶

DRAKE

Drake assures us, on the authority of Warton,

That the monks of Monte Cassino (in Italy), were distinguished, not only for their knowledge of science, but for their attention to polite learning, and their acquaintance with the classics. Their learned Abbot, Desiderius, collected the best Greek and Roman authors. The fraternity not only composed learned treatises on music, logic, astronomy, and the Vitruvian architecture, but likewise employed a portion of their time in transcribing Tacitus, etc. This laudable example was, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, followed with great spirit and emulation by many English monasteries.¹⁷

SHARON TURNER

Sharon Turner, in his History of England, speaks of the monasteries after this wise:

¹⁶ “History of the Swiss,” vol. i, p. 105.

¹⁷ “Literary Hours,” vol. ii, p. 435.

No tyranny was ever established, that was more unequivocally the creature of popular will, nor longer maintained by popular support: in no point did personal interest and public welfare more cordially unite, than in the encouragement of monasteries.¹⁸

BATES

Bates, another Protestant writer, recommends the establishment in England of a species of Protestant nunneries for the instruction of young ladies, in order to counteract the influence of Catholic female convents. He says:

Thus might the comfort and welfare of many individuals be promoted to the great benefit of society at large, and the interests of popery, by improving on its own principles, be considerably counteracted.¹⁹

Protestants, some years ago, tried this experiment in London, but the affair turned out an utter failure. However, the elopements extraordinary which broke up the attempted establishment, *were* perhaps "an improvement on the principles of popery!" The whole business, like all other previous attempts at reformation by Protestants, ended, as Erasmus had caustically observed, "in the comedy of marriage!" 'Alas! Protestantism has not vitality enough for such undertakings.

¹⁸ Vol. ii, pp. 332 and 361. We suppose that hard word *tyranny* was thrown in as a *douceur* to Protestant prejudice. It requires more acute optics than ours to perceive how that can be "tyranny," which is "unequivocally the creature of popular will," and which combines "personal interest and public welfare."

¹⁹ "Rural Philosophy," p. 322.

“QUARTERLY REVIEW”

We will close this mass of Protestant testimony, by a beautiful passage from the *Quarterly Review*, for December, 1811:

The world has never been so much indebted to any other body of men, as to the illustrious Order of Benedictine monks. . . . Tinian and Juan Fernandez are not more beautiful spots on the ocean, than Malmesbury, Lindisfarne, and Jarrow were in the ages of our heptarchy. A community of pious men devoted to literature, and to the useful arts, as well as to religion, seems in those days like a green oasis amid the desert. Like stars on a moonless night, they shine upon us with a tranquil ray. If ever there was a man who could truly be called *venerable*, it was he to whom the appellation is constantly fixed, Bede, whose life was passed in instructing his own generation, and preparing records for posterity. In those days the Church offered the only asylum from the evils to which every country was exposed—amidst continual wars, the Church enjoyed peace—it was regarded as a sacred realm by men, who, though they hated one another, believed in and feared the same God. . . . The wise as well as the timid and gentle fled to the *Goshen* of God, which enjoyed its own light and calm amidst darkness and storms.

II. According to our plan, we will now endeavor to prove, that this Protestant homage paid to the institutions of the Catholic Church is based upon the facts of authentic history, derived from original documents. And while pursuing this line of illustration, we will be enabled to see more in detail what the Catholic Clergy and the monks have done for literature.

MONKS TRANSCRIBING BOOKS

Before the invention of the art of printing by Guttenberg and his associates, about the year 1436,

the scarcity of books was perhaps the greatest difficulty with which literature had to struggle. Books, which could be multiplied only by the tedious process of copying by hand, were necessarily scarce and dear. It cost a man almost the labor of a life-time, to obtain even a scanty library by this means. At the present day, when books have been so vastly multiplied, we can hardly form an adequate idea of the obstacles which our forefathers had to overcome in the Middle Ages. It ill becomes us to sneer at their ignorance, when, due allowance being made for the difficulty of their position in this respect, they might perhaps compare advantageously with us, in ardor and zeal for the promotion of learning. Besides, by their patient labor in the transcription of books, they preserved *for us* the treasures of ancient Latin and Greek Literature—to say nothing of the Fathers and of the sacred writings—and they thereby laid the foundation of modern literature, and made it *possible* for us to be learned. Gratitude for a service so important, should incline us to leniency in judging of their progress in letters. But they need not our mercy; all they demand is our justice. If they be judged according to this standard, they will not suffer by comparison even with our enlightened age, everything being taken into the account.

ORIGIN OF LIBRARIES

The history of the formation and preservation of libraries before the art of printing, is one of the most interesting and useful branches of literary in-

quiry. It is an investigation intimately connected with the advancement of learning during the Middle Ages, as well as with its present condition. Those who founded and multiplied libraries deserve the immortal gratitude of this age. We propose to show: first, how libraries were founded throughout the Christian world, at the period in question, and what agency the Catholic clergy had in their establishment; and secondly, how, and by what means, these libraries were increased and multiplied over the world.

ANCIENT CHRISTIAN LIBRARIES

1. Religion and literature were always cultivated together. The library grew up with the school, under the shadow of the Church. Libraries were attached to most of the ancient churches, particularly to those of the patriarchal, metropolitan, and episcopal sees. Eusebius tells us of his frequent visits to the library attached to the Cathedral Church of Cæsarea. St. Jerome, in his Letters, often speaks of that connected with the church at Jerusalem. But the most famous collections of books among the ancient Christians were those at Rome, Alexandria, and Constantinople. That of Rome, in the famous Lateran Basilica, was founded by St. Hilary, a Pope of the sixth century. It was divided into two departments: the private, or that of the archives of the Roman Church, and the public or classical, to which all could have access.²⁰

Of the three libraries just mentioned, that of

²⁰ *Vide Anastasius Bibliothecarius—in Vita Hilarii.*

Rome alone has been preserved to our day. Transferred to the Vatican, it has shared the immortality of the "Eternal City"; and it is at the present day the one which is most famous for old manuscripts, and the richest in ancient lore. The suite of rooms in which it is contained, is nearly a quarter of a mile long, and it is surpassingly rich and splendid. The library of Constantinople, containing about one hundred thousand manuscript volumes, was destroyed in one of those popular seditions so common in that city during the Middle Ages. That of Alexandria, supposed to contain no less than seven hundred thousand manuscript tomes, was burnt by order of the Caliph Omar, about the year 632. Its loss was an irreparable blow to literature. Perhaps hundreds of works of the Fathers, and of the ancient classics perished in that one brief conflagration.

CATHEDRAL AND MONASTIC LIBRARIES

In Germany, the cathedrals of Hamburg, Bamberg, Cologne, Paderborn, and many others, had extensive libraries adjoining them. Those attached to the cathedrals of England were no less famous.²¹ The library was often a part of the church building itself. Among ancient writers, it was called by different names—*Secretarium*, *Chartarium*, *Archivium*, *Scrinium*, *Librarium*, etc. St. Gregory the Great, about the year 600, wrote to Eulogius, Patriarch of Alexandria, who had asked him for a particular work: "That the book he sought for could not be found, either in the archives of the Roman Church,

²¹ See Heeren, *Opp.* 1, 65.

or in the other collections of the city"—which passage proves that there were many libraries in Rome, at the close of the sixth century.

The agency of the Catholic clergy, both secular and regular, in forming the ancient libraries, is manifest from every document connected with the history of those establishments. Even in pagan times, the priesthood had been entrusted with the guardianship of books, profane as well as sacred. In ancient Rome, the temples of Apollo Palatine, of Peace, and of the Capitol, and in Egypt that of Serapis, were the depositories of books, of which the priests had charge. The Catholic clergy were always the chief librarians in the early times of the Church, and particularly in the Middle Ages. The Emperor Justinian ordered that copies of his laws should be kept in the principal churches of the empire, with as much care as the sacred vases. In many episcopal cities, such as Rome, Hippo, Vercelli, and Tours, the clergy lived in common with the bishop, and conducted flourishing schools under his eye. There were also schools adjoining the other cathedral, and even the principal parochial churches. This created a necessity for books. And accordingly, we find that those places were the *nuclei* of the most extensive libraries in Europe.

MONKS COLLECTED BOOKS INTO LIBRARIES

But the monks distinguished themselves most, both in the collection of books, and in the founding of libraries. Monasteries were founded in the East, as early as the fourth century. The rule of St.

Pachomius enters into the most minute details, concerning the necessity of taking care of the books contained in the monastic library. Two monks were appointed in each house for this purpose. Each one was directed to have his own reading book. There were from thirty to forty houses belonging to this Order, with an average of forty monks in each; so that the total number of monks was between twelve and sixteen hundred. The number of books was, by the monastic rule just alluded to, at least as great. And yet this Monastic Order made no special profession of letters; and the monks belonging to it were, many of them, simple and unlearned.

ZEAL OF MONKS IN SAVING BOOKS

In the sixth century, the great Cassiodorus bequeathed his library, which he had collected with incredible labor, to the Solitaries; knowing "that among them alone could the faint rays of science be gathered together, increase, and form a great light, to enlighten the nations." St. Augustine, in his last will, recommended his library to the care of his priests, who lived in common with him, under a rule drawn up by himself. So great was the importance attached to the preservation of the monastic libraries, that St. Gregory the Great, himself a Benedictine monk, instituted a legal process in order to have a book restored to a monastery. The forty monks whom this sainted Pontiff sent out with St. Augustine to labor for the conversion of England, carried many books with them, and among others, a Homer.²² We may as well state here, as elsewhere,

²² See Lingard's "Antiquities of the Anglo Saxon Church," ch. x.

that many ancient bishops were in the habit of carrying their books with them while traveling. This was the practice of St. Burchard, who flourished, A. D. 751; and of St. Bruno, who died 965. The disciples of Ratherius, the famous Bishop of Verona, who lived in the tenth century, always sent his books before him, in his numerous journeys through Europe. Among these was a copy of Plautus, and another of Terence.

PRINCIPAL MONASTIC COLLECTIONS OF MANUSCRIPTS

St. Bennet Biscop founded the famous Abbey of Weremouth in England, A. D. 674. He traversed Europe no less than five times, in order to collect books, and to establish a library in this his cherished monastery. The Venerable Bede tells us that, by means of these peregrinations, "He brought into England an almost innumerable quantity of books of every kind."²³ These, on dying, he bequeathed to his disciples, holding them responsible before God for their preservation. His love for learning was thus his ruling passion, strong even in death. The Abbots Ceolfrid and Egbert contributed much towards increasing this venerable library.

The great Alcuin, in the beginning of the ninth century, wrote in Latin verse a catalogue of the books belonging to the famous library at York. From this catalogue, which is still extant, it appears that York then possessed the works of most of the Fathers, as well as of the ancient classics.

²³ "Innumerabilem omnis generis copiam (librorum) cum appor-tasse."

The libraries of the monasteries were often called *armoria*, or armories. The Abbot of the Monastery of Beaugency, in the twelfth century, assigns the reason for this name, by observing, that "Libraries are as essential to monasteries, as armories are to armies in time of war." The saying of Mathias Mittner, in the sixteenth century, was a stated maxim among the monks of the Middle Ages: "*Ignorance is everywhere the mother of vice.*"²⁴

CARE OF BOOKS ENJOINED BY RULE

The care which the monks were bound by their rule to take of their books, is truly astonishing. At Citeaux, a reader was not allowed to leave his book alone, even for a moment; he was obliged to replace it in the *armory*, or leave it in charge of another. St. Isidore directed that books should be returned to the library every evening. The rule of the great Chartreuse monastery directs, that "books be most cautiously and diligently kept, as the food of our souls." The Abbot Riquier (eleventh century), at the close of a catalogue of books he had drawn up, exclaims: "This is the wealth of the cloister—these are the riches of the heavenly life!"²⁵

These and similar facts may serve to explain to us how it is, that in entering many of the libraries of Europe at the present day, we often read over the door an inscription, threatening excommunication against any one who will dare remove a book without the proper authority. This is a relict of medieval solicitude for the preservation of books.

²⁴ "*Ignorantia ubique multorum malorum est mater.*"

²⁵ "*Hæ sunt divitiae claustrales, hæ sunt opulentiae vitæ cœlestis!*"

Our own carelessness at the present time is rebuked by the ardent love of books in the olden days, at the ignorance of which we often nevertheless most unwittingly sneer.

Towards the close of the fifteenth century, Trithemius collected no less than two thousand volumes of valuable manuscripts. In his learned chronicles of the abbeys of Spanheim and Hirschau in Germany, he shows how much we are indebted to the monks for the preservation of ancient learning. Though the monasteries were generally held sacred, even by the barbarians, yet they were sometimes destroyed. In such cases, the books were saved by the monks in preference to any other property. Trithemius tells us, that when the monastery of Rossano was destroyed by the Saracens, in the tenth century, the holy Abbot Nilus retired to Rome, deeply chagrined; and he reckons the parting with his books the greatest trial which this good man ever had to encounter. In 883, the Abbey of Fleury was destroyed; but the books were saved by the care of the monks. So also, when the Abbey of St. Gall was attacked by the Madgars in the tenth century, the monks fled to the mountains, carrying nothing with them but their books. The monks of Monte Cassino, when this monastery was assailed by the Lombards, in 685, had likewise the good fortune to save their library. To show the value set on books by the monks, the following fact may be adduced. St. Fulard, Abbot of St. Dennis, in the eighth century, in a schedule of the property belonging to the monastery at his death, places the books immediately after the gold and silver.

The library of Spanheim, in Germany, contained two thousand volumes in the fifteenth century. According to the testimony of one of its monks, that of Novalaise in Piedmont contained, in the tenth century, more than six thousand books.²⁶ Leland, the librarian of Henry VIII, testifies that there were seventeen hundred manuscripts in the Abbey of Peterborough in England. He also states that the library of the Franciscans in London was one hundred and twenty-nine feet long, and thirty-one feet broad, and that it was "well filled with books"; and that the Abbey of Wells had a library with twenty-five windows on each side. According to Ingulphus, the library of Crowland had seven hundred volumes, when it was burned in 1090.

What has become of all these once splendid libraries, collected and preserved with so much care by the monks of the *Dark Ages*? Alas! they have been, almost all of them, dilapidated or wholly destroyed. The Goths, Vandals, and Saracens, were not the only enemies of learning, nor the only destroyers of libraries. Those who have been so much in the habit of sneering at "monkish ignorance and superstition," are the very ones to whom we are indebted, in a great measure, for this work of destruction! The Reformation enkindled a fire which consumed them. The spoilers under Henry VIII and Edward VI destroyed many of those attached to the abbeys in England;²⁷ and not to multiply facts, the library of St. Benedict *sur Loire*, with five thousand

²⁶ See Eugenii de Levis, *Anecdota Sacra. Praef.* xxviii.

²⁷ See Cobbett's "History of the Reformation," vol. ii, for abundant proofs of this.

volumes, was burned by the Huguenots in the sixteenth century.

2. By what means were the ancient libraries augmented and multiplied over Europe? We answer unhesitatingly, that it was chiefly by the patient labor and persevering industry of the monks, who flourished in the *Dark Ages*. Among the ancient Greeks and Romans, slaves were employed in the irksome occupation of copying books. The task of transcribing books, in Christian times, devolved chiefly on the monks, as we shall now proceed to show by undeniable facts.

Before the invention of the art of printing, it was very difficult to become an author. He who aspired to this enviable distinction, imposed on himself a labor truly herculean. He had to travel from place to place, in quest of the manuscripts to which he wished to refer. These he was often obliged to correct, by collating them with one another; and, as he was not generally allowed to transport them from their place, in order to make the collation, he had frequently to stop and sit down patiently to the task of transcribing them, which was a work of months —sometimes of years. Thus whole years of indefatigable industry were required, merely as a novitiate to authorship. We doubt whether at this day half the number of books would be composed, as we know to have been written in the Middle Ages, if so many obstacles had first to be overcome.

SCARCITY OF BOOKS

AGENCY OF THE UNIVERSITIES

The great scarcity of books, which mainly induced all this labor, continued till about the middle of the thirteenth century. From this date, manuscripts became more abundant, especially in the great cities where the universities were established. Thus, in the year 1325, there were attached to the University of Paris twenty-three *stationarii*, or stationed booksellers, of whom two were women. Besides these, there were also a great many traveling hawkers of manuscripts. In order to obtain a license to sell, these booksellers were bound by law to take an oath to observe the regulations of the university, which forbade them to sell any books to strangers, or to keep on hand for sale any works besides those commonly used by the students. The motives of these local regulations seem to have been: to make the books in the university cheaper, by creating a greater demand for them, and to keep the minds of the students from being distracted by reading works foreign to their course of study.

What we have just said of the University of Paris, may be also observed of those of Bologna, Rome, Padua, Pavia, Perugia, Naples, Salamanca, Valladolid, Alcalà, Oxford, and Cambridge; attached to all of which were *bibliopolæ*, or booksellers, bound by certain university regulations.

How were the shops of these booksellers filled with books? And how were the libraries of books, not kept on sale, maintained and augmented? In those

distracted times, temporal princes had neither time nor inclination to copy manuscripts themselves, nor sufficient zeal for letters to induce them to employ copyists. The bishops and the secular clergy were in general too much occupied, to devote much time to this laborious duty. This task devolved chiefly on the monks, who lived in common, and had more leisure. To render the profession of copyist permanent and generally useful, required the joint labor of many acting in concert, under a rule which enjoined obedience, and recommended labor for the love of God. The monastic institute alone possessed these requisites, and offered motives so exalted for patient industry.

RELIGIOUS WOMEN ENGAGED AS COPYISTS

Prompted by views thus lofty, even religious ladies in the convent not unfrequently employed their time in transcribing books. Eusebius, the father of church history, speaks of young virgins employed as copyists by ecclesiastical writers of the first four centuries. Even as early as the days of Tatian, in the second century, the zeal of religious women for letters excited the bile, and provoked the satire of the enemies of Christianity. In the fifth century, St. Melania, the Younger, is praised by her biographer for the exactness, beauty, and rapidity of her writing. St. Cæsaria, and her co-religious in the sixth century, acquired great reputation for the same accomplishments.²⁸ In the eighth century, St. Boniface, the apostle of Germany, writing to an

²⁸ See Mabillon—*Acta Ord. S. Benedicti*, tom. i, p. 668, *et seq.*

abbess, prays her to copy in golden letters the epistles of St. Peter.²⁹

WRITING WITH GOLDEN AND SILVER INK

We may here remark, by the way, that the art of writing with golden and silver ink, now disused if not wholly lost, seems to have been very common in the *Dark Ages*. Many ancient manuscripts in this beautiful writing are still preserved. The writer of this paper, some few years ago, saw in the Vatican library at Rome a splendid copy of a Greek New Testament written entirely in letters of gold. It is said to have been executed at Constantinople, in the eleventh or twelfth century.

ILLUMINATED MARGINS

Who that has visited the ancient libraries, has not admired the beautiful penmanship, the tasty marginal decorations, and the splendid pictorial illustrations, of many among the old illuminated manuscripts?³⁰ In many of these exquisite ornaments, the delicate hand of woman is readily traced. SS. Hamilda and Renilda, two Belgian abesses of the ninth century, employed their time in transcribing manuscripts. An abbot of the Premonstrants in the thirteenth century, while traveling to collect books,

²⁹ *Epist.* 28.

³⁰ See on this interesting subject, two or three articles in that excellent French religious and philosophical monthly publication, *Annales de la Philosophie Chrétienne*. The writer of those papers proves, by abundant evidence, to what perfection penmanship and miniature painting were carried in the Middle Ages.

prevailed on several religious ladies of Flanders to aid him in transcribing them.³¹

All the Monastic Orders employed copyists among their inmates. St. Jerome and St. Ephrem of Edessa, strongly recommended this useful occupation to the eastern cenobites. The monks of St. Martin of Tours had no other manual labor.³² In the sixth century, St. Ferreol laid down this rule for his monks: "Let him paint the page with his hand, who does not cultivate the earth with the plow."³³ About the same time, the retired Roman Senator Cassiodorus, while in his ninety-third year, wrote in his cloister of Virarium a special treatise on orthography. He was enthusiastic in recommending to the monks the employment of transcribing books. He calls it a godlike occupation, "multiplying celestial words, speaking to the absent, wounding Satan." Thus was the painful labor of the copyist ennobled and hallowed by the lofty motives of religion!

THE SCRIPTORIUM

Next came the Benedictines, who, according to the testimony of St. Gregory the Great, were engaged, from the very infancy of their order, "in tilling the soil, and in transcribing manuscripts." We have already seen, from Protestant authority, how much literature is indebted to this illustrious Order. Every monastery had a *Scriptorium*, or a hall

³¹ Le Beuf, *Autogr.* c. 1.

³² Sulpitius Severus, *Vita S. Martini*—vii.

³³ "Paginam, pingat digito, qui terram non proscindit aratro."

specially set apart for copying books. Alcuin recommends to those engaged in this occupation the strictest silence, in order to prevent mutual interruption, and to avoid dissipation of the mind, which, during so noble an employment, should be centered in God! The greater monasteries generally employed at least twelve copyists. For this duty, not only the younger monks, but often those of greater age and celebrity —such as Alcuin, Dunstan, etc., were selected.

WHAT WE OWE TO PATIENT MONASTIC LABOR

The monks were not, in fact, mere blind copyists; they were often men of learning, who carefully collated and corrected the manuscripts they were engaged in transcribing. As early as the sixth century, one of the oldest monks of the Monastery of Mesmin, near Orléans in France, was employed in arranging and collating the books of the monastic library.³⁴ Alcuin, in the ninth age, was employed by Charlemagne in collating the manuscripts of the Bible, with a view to its correction. Charlemagne himself devoted part of his time to comparing various manuscripts of the four Gospels. About the same time, Lupus, Abbot of Ferrières, employed his leisure hours in transcribing and collating the manuscripts of the library belonging to his monastery. He mentions Sallust and other classical works, on which he was thus laboring.³⁵ In his Letters, he thanks Ansbald, Abbot of Prum, for a copy of Cicero's Epistles; and Adalpard, for a revised copy of Macrobius.

³⁴ See Petit Radel, *Bibliotheq.* p. 46.

³⁵ *Epist. ad Regimbert,* 104.

One of the greatest literati of the Middle Ages, was the monk Gerbert, afterwards Pope Sylvester II. In one of his many Epistles,³⁶ he earnestly recommended a revision and correction of the works of Pliny, a labor, says he, which required great knowledge and critical skill. St. Anselm, writing to the Archbishop of Canterbury, begs the loan of various books for the use of the Monastery of Bec in Normandy, over which he then presided; but he desires that only the most correct copies be sent.³⁷ Lanfranc's revised edition of the Holy Scriptures is well known by the learned, who justly prize it for its accuracy. In the Grande Chartreuse, the corrections to be made by the copyists were decided on in full chapter of the monastery.

The *armarius bibliothecarius*, or librarian, was an officer of exalted dignity, both at court and in the libraries, especially in those of the monks. He had under his supervision a number of skillful copyists. The distance of place, and the difficulty of communication in those unsettled times, were great obstacles to the general collation and correction of manuscripts. These difficulties were, however, boldly met, and courageously overcome by the monks. Books were often interchanged. Thus Servatus Lupus and Eginhard were in the habit of exchanging works between their respective monasteries of Ferrières and Fulda. The former, in a letter to the Abbot Alsig of York, asks for the loan of the works of Quintillian, as also of various works of St. Jerome, Bede, and other Fathers; and he proposes a bond

³⁶ *Epistola 7.*

³⁷ *S. Anselmi, Epistolæ*, b. i, 43.

of the holiest friendship, to be based upon the inter-communication of prayers and books between the two monasteries of Ferrières and York.

MEANS OF AUGMENTING LIBRARIES

Besides the *Scriptorium*, the monasteries possessed various other resources for augmenting their libraries. The liberality of princes and of the people was often successfully appealed to, for this laudable purpose. Certain seignorial rights over the territory adjoining them, were another abundant resource. Many monasteries had also special rules contemplating the same object. Some required the novice, at his entrance into the religious order, to contribute something towards the library, or to furnish a copy of some work which was rare. Others had a rule which required scholars frequenting the monastic schools to furnish each year two volumes of manuscripts transcribed by themselves. By all these means, and above all, by the patient industry of the monks, the monastic libraries became the richest treasures of Literature in the Middle Ages. In what is by many considered the darkest and most barren age of this period—the tenth century—we have already seen that the library of St. Benedict *sur Loire* has five thousand volumes; and that of Novalaise, in Piedmont, upwards of six thousand.

ENCOURAGEMENT AFFORDED BY ROMAN PONTIFFS

Throughout that whole period, Italy was the center of literature, as well as the grand repository of

books. The zeal of the Roman Pontiffs for the diffusion of learning, and for the distribution of books throughout the Christian world, cannot be sufficiently appreciated and admired. St. Gregory the Great was written to repeatedly on this subject, from Gaul and even from Alexandria.³⁸ St. Martin I received petitions for books from Belgium and from Spain.³⁹ Pope Paul I was asked by Pepin for Greek works, to be placed in the library of St. Dennis: among them were Aristotle, a treatise on geometry, probably Euclid, and many others. Gerbert wrote no less than thirteen Epistles,⁴⁰ some of them to Roman Pontiffs, to ask for books. Among the works he most desired, were "Mamilius, *De Astronomia*," "Victorinus, *De Rhetoria*," and those of Lupitus of Barcelona.

SUMMARY OF WHAT THE CLERGY AND MONKS HAVE DONE FOR LITERATURE

We have thus endeavored to show, both from Protestant authority, and from original documents: What the Catholic clergy, and especially the monks, have done for literature. The facts we have alleged must be blotted from the pages of history, before we can excuse many Protestant historians for charging the Catholic Church with fostering ignorance, and for habitually sneering at "monkish indolence and superstition." Without the generous and patient labors of these much abused men, how

³⁸ *S. Gregorii, Epistolæ*, xi. 56.

³⁹ Baronius, *Annales ad Ann.* 649.

⁴⁰ *Epistolæ* 130, et aliae.

many of the works of the ancients, think you, would have been transmitted to us? Without them, the Middle Ages would have been a yawning gulf, which would have swallowed up all the literary treasures of antiquity. Without their indefatigable industry, we should not now be able to feast on the eloquence of Cicero and Demosthenes, nor to be charmed with the beautiful strains of Homer and Virgil.

The monks have been often charged with wantonly destroying many of the most valuable classical works of antiquity, in order to use the parchment on which they were written for copying out comparatively insignificant treatises on piety, or legends of the Saints. But is it either just or fair to charge on the whole body of monks what was done by very few of their members, and by these only when pressed for the want of writing material, necessary for transcribing books in daily use among them?⁴¹ Are we to lose sight of the general, persevering, and almost inconceivable literary labors of this illustrious body of men, merely because, here and there, an ignorant monk could not properly appreciate a work of the ancient classics?

Besides, how can the accusers of the monks prove, that in more than one or two instances any classical work was really lost, even for a time, by the very rare act of copying another work on the same parchment? How can they show that when this took place, there was only *one* copy of the work thus mutilated,

⁴¹ After the subjugation of Egypt by the Saracens, in the seventh century, the supply of papyrus was cut off, and Europe suffered greatly from the scarcity of writing material. Muratori thinks that we are to ascribe, in a great measure, to the fact just mentioned the subsequent decline of letters in Europe.

in the world? Yet they should establish all this to make good their accusation.

Again, in most of the instances in which we know of this abuse having occurred, the original work was not destroyed, but only obscured. And who was it that taught Europe how to decipher those hitherto hidden writings? Who, by skill and patient industry, revealed the hidden mysteries of the *Palimpsests*, and discovered the lost work of Cicero—*De Republica*? Was it one of the loudly boasting, and bitterly sneering literati of Protestant Germany or England? No. It was an ex-Jesuit—a Roman priest, living at Rome—afterwards Cardinal Mai! And this was but one of his splendid literary achievements! ⁴²

To conclude; it was a monk, Roger Bacon, who first discovered and explained those principles which, a little later, led another monk, Schwartz, of Cologne, to invent gunpowder; and which, more fully developed some centuries afterwards by the great Catholic philosopher, Galileo, enabled him to invent the microscope and the telescope. It was a monk, Salvino of Pisa, who, in the twelfth century, invented spectacles for the old and for the shortsighted. To the monks, Pacifico of Verona, the great Gerbert, and William, Abbot of Hirschau, we owe the invention of clocks, some time between the tenth and twelfth centuries. It was the monks, who in the

⁴² Those who may wish to see more on this highly interesting subject, are referred to Bingham, *De Antiquis Ecclesiae Scholis et Bibliothecis*, tom. iii; to Hospinianus, *De Templis*; to Komeier, *De Bibliothecis*; to Mabillon, *De Studiis Monasticis*, and *Acta Ord. S. Benedicti*; and to a series of very learned articles on the subject, in some late numbers of the *Annales de la Philosophie Chrétienne*, already mentioned.

Middle Ages, taught the people agriculture, and who, by their skillful industry, reclaimed whole tracts of waste land. It was the monks who first cultivated botany, and made known the hidden medicinal properties of plants. It is to the monks, that we are in all probability indebted for the paper on which we write.

It was the monk, Gerbert, who first introduced into Europe the arithmetical numbers of the Arabs, A. D. 991, and who thus laid the foundation of arithmetical and mathematical studies. It was a Spanish Benedictine monk, Pedro da Ponce, who, A. D. 1570, first taught Europe the art of instructing the deaf and dumb. It was a French Catholic priest, the Abbé Haiiy, who, in a work published towards the close of the last century, first unfolded the principles of the modern science of mineralogy. It was a Catholic priest, Nicholas Copernicus, who, in the beginning of the sixteenth century, promulgated the theory of a system of the world, appropriately called after him the *Copernican*, which is now generally received, and which led to the brilliant discoveries of Kepler and Galileo, and formed the basis of the splendid mathematical demonstrations of Newton and La Place.

Finally, it is to the missionary zeal of Catholic priests that we are indebted for most of our earliest maritime and geographical knowledge. The Catholic priest always accompanied voyages of discovery and expeditions of conquest; often stimulating the former by his zeal for the salvation of souls, and softening down the rigors of the latter by the exercise of his heroic charity. Catholic priests were, at all

times, the pioneers of civilization; and the Cross always accompanied, it sometimes went before, the banner of mere earthly dominion.

CHAPTER IV

SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES IN THE “DARK” AGES

PROTESTANT BOASTING

OF all the puffs of this puffing age, none has been louder or of longer continuance, than that which has vaunted the triumphs of Protestantism in the matter of education. By dint of constant boasting, Protestant writers have almost persuaded the world, that its rise from barbarism, its enlightenment in literature, its progress in science and art, its present civilization, are all ascribable to the revolution, called by its friends the *Reformation*; and that before that blessed event, all was darkness and wide-spread desolation. The Church sat down in the midst of this darkness, quite at home and at her ease: she made no effort to dissipate the gloom; she fostered it rather, as the thing above all others most suited to her wicked purpose, of infusing into the minds of men the deadly poison of error and superstition!

LIGHT AND DARKNESS

Such is the proudly boasting theory, which Protestant writers have sought to establish, rather by bold and reckless assertion, than by calm and solid argument. Since this religious revolution, of the

sixteenth century, there has been in the world one continual puff! puff!! puff!!!—and, amidst the accompanying noise and smoke, men's minds have been scarcely calm enough to form a correct judgment on the true facts of history. The Catholic Church, on the contrary, has boasted little, and done much; without vaunting her literary triumphs, she has really been the foundress of schools and universities, the fosterer of arts and sciences, and the mother of inventions; as will abundantly appear, we think, from the fact embodied in this chapter. Before Protestantism was ever heard of, she had struggled single-handed for centuries against ignorance and barbarism. She had already achieved a splendid triumph over these evils, some time before the dawn of the Reformation. The brilliant literary age of Leo X, which was at its meridian of glory when Luther began his revolt, has never been surpassed—if even rivaled—by Protestants at any subsequent epoch.

REVIVAL OF LETTERS AND THE REFORMATION

Were this the place for such an investigation, facts might be accumulated to show, that the Reformation, instead of advancing, retarded the progress of learning for a whole century. Amidst the confusion, angry polemics, and bloody civil wars, to which that revolution gave rise, men had neither time nor inclination to apply to the cultivation of letters. Great minds which, during “Leo's golden days,” had directed all their energies to literary pursuits, were then destined to consume their

strength in acrimonious religious controversy. Instead of drinking at the pure fountains of Helicon, they were doomed to slake their thirst at the troubled waters of controversial debate. The history of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, remarkably sterile in literary improvement and invention, compared with the two previous ones, affords a striking demonstration of this position.

EARLY AND RECENT PERSECUTION OF SLANDER COMPARED

In more modern times, in our own age and country, the course pursued by Protestant writers towards the Catholic Church, on the subject of education, has been singularly unjust and inconsistent. Sometimes they accuse her of fostering ignorance, and at others, of monopolizing education. These two charges are also not unfrequently made in the same breath, and in reference to the same time and place! In proof of this assertion, we confidently appeal to the line of argument adopted by the Protestant religious press in the United States, during the last quarter of a century. Whatever rule of conduct she pursues, the Catholic Church cannot please these fastidious gentry of the Protestant press and pulpit. Does she rear schools and colleges all over the land, going even beyond her means to bring education to the door of the humblest citizen? The cry is at once raised, that she wishes to monopolize education, and to use the influence thus obtained in order to make proselytes to her creed. Does she make no extraordinary efforts in behalf of learning? The old stereotype charge is rung in our ears, that she means

to foster ignorance. Placed in a dilemma, analogous to that of her Divine Founder and Spouse, while He was laboring for the redemption of mankind in the land of Israel, she may apply His language, in addressing the people of this age of boasted enlightenment: "But whereunto shall I esteem this generation to be like? It is like children sitting in the market-place, who crying to their companions say: We have piped to you, and you have not danced; we have lamented, and you have not mourned."¹

GIBBON

The charge preferred against the Church—of encouraging ignorance—is as old as Christianity. The Christians of the first three centuries were sneered at for their poverty and their want of learning. This calumnious accusation is repeated over and over again, with singular gusto, by that heartless and sneering infidel, Gibbon; whose grandiloquent style and well-rounded periods have contributed, perhaps more than the writings of any other enemy of Christianity, to poison the minds of youth, and to foster real ignorance, under the pretext of promoting philosophy. The greediness with which this and similar works are sought for and devoured in Protestant communities, is one out of many proofs, that all errorists sympathize with one another. Such works meet with very little sympathy in Catholic countries. In fact, the best refutation of the insidious history of "The Decline and Downfall of the Roman Empire," is the production of an Italian Catholic.²

¹ Matt. xi. 16, 17.

² Spedalieri—"Rifutazione di Gibbon," 5 vols. 12mo. An abridg-

In the fourth century, that arch enemy of Christianity, Julian the Apostate, by legal enactments against the education of Christians in the colleges and schools of the Roman Empire, sought to perpetuate this stigma of ignorance. The imperial persecutor had the heartlessness to sneer at the ignorance of Christians, and to prohibit their education in the same breath!³

It is a singular coincidence in the history of mankind, that England, after the Reformation, adopted precisely the same iniquitous course towards Catholic Ireland. By her statutes, it was penal for a Catholic to teach school in Ireland; and yet, as if exulting with fiendish delight at the mischief which this iniquitous law was calculated to produce, you might hear her loud and long protracted notes of triumph over the ignorance and debasement of the Irish—a triumph not justified, however, by the facts, notwithstanding every English Protestant effort to foster ignorance!

PROTESTANT THEORY

The usual device of Protestant writers is, to accuse the Catholic Church of promoting ignorance, especially during the Middle Ages, in order that, availingly herself of the general darkness of that

ment, at least, of this work should be given to the English community.

³ And yet Gibbon, Tytler, and other historians much in favor among Protestants, are in the habit of eulogizing this apostate, as the greatest philosopher and legislator of his age; while they have little but reproach and sneers to bestow on such men as Constantine and Theodosius! Another proof, this, of the tender kindred feeling existing amongst errorists of different shades of opinion.

period, she might the more easily establish her erroneous principles. This theory has been so often and so boldly stated, that it has almost passed current as truth in our *enlightened* age. Does the Catholic ask the Protestant to inform him when even *one* of the Catholic doctrines, against which he protests, had its origin at any period subsequent to the Apostolic age? Perhaps some other response may at first be hazarded: but when driven from every other position, the answer will probably be, that the doctrine in question originated in the *Dark Ages*! And when asked further, when and *where* it was first broached during that period, the respondent shrouds himself triumphantly in the *darkness* of these Ages, as in a panoply of strength, and thinks himself clad in a mail of proof? We have more than once been amused at *such* exhibitions of polemical skill.

LAME ARGUMENT.

And yet this argument, or rather subterfuge, has not even the merit of speciousness or plausibility. To borrow an expressive figure from the schoolmen of the *Dark Ages*, it is lame of both feet—*utroque claudicat pede*: the premises are not true, and if they were, the conclusion would not follow. In other words, it is not true, that the epoch in question was *so dark* as it is often represented; and even if it had been tenfold more so, it would not thence follow that Christianity could then have been more easily corrupted, than at any other more enlightened period.

To begin with this last position; did Christ anywhere say, that literature was intended to be a distinctive mark of His Church? Or that His promises to the Church were to depend for their fulfillment on the literary qualifications of His followers? Was the promotion of human learning a principal object of His divine mission? Had it been so, would He not have selected, as the heralds of His kingdom, men of talents and gifted with human learning, rather than poor illiterate fishermen? Would He not have sought out and commissioned, to found His religion, the philosophers and rhetoricians of Greece and Rome, in preference to twelve unlearned men selected for this purpose from the lowest walks of life in Judea? The truth is, that “He chose the foolish things of the world, that He might confound the wise; and the weak things of the world, that He might confound the strong; and the mean things of the world, and the things that are contemptible, and things that are not, that He might destroy the things that are; that no flesh should glory in His sight.”⁴ It was a leading maxim of His kingdom, that “Knowledge puffeth up; but charity edifieth.”⁵ He promised, that the “gates of hell shall not prevail against My Church,” built upon a rock;⁶ without even once intimating that the fulfillment of this solemn pledge was to depend on the encouragement of human learning by His Church.

The other *foot* of the argument is equally *lame*. The Church has, in fact, always promoted learning,

⁴ 1 Corinth. i. 27-29.

⁵ 1 Corinth. viii. 1.

⁶ Matt. xvi. 18.

even in the most calamitous periods of her history. Men of every shade of opinion are beginning to pay this homage to truth. In Germany, in France, in Italy, and in England, writers of distinguished ability, without distinction of creed, have applied themselves with singular industry and success to exploring the hitherto neglected treasures of mediæval literature.⁷ And the man who, with the result of all these literary labors spread out before the world, will still persist in calling the Middle Ages *dark*, only exhibits the *darkness* of his own mind on the subject, and resembles one who, blindfolded at midday, should persevere in declaring against all evidence that it was as *dark* as midnight!

We have elsewhere spoken in some detail of the services rendered to learning by the Catholic energy, as well as of the condition of literature and the arts in the Middle Ages. What we purpose to do, at present is to furnish a summary sketch of the schools and universities founded by the Church during that period.

⁷ The principal writers on this subject are in Italy, Muratori—*Dissertationes de Antiquitatibus Medii Ævi*, 6 vols. folio—Tiraboschi—*Storia Della Letteratura Italiana*, 28 vols. 32mo.—Bettinelli—*Risorgimento, della Letteratura Italiana*, 2 vols. 8vo.—Andres—*Storia di ogni Letteratura*, 6 vols. 4to.—Battini—*Apologia dei Scoli Barbareschi*, 3 vols. 12mo, besides many others. In Germany, Heeren—*Geschichte des Studiums der classischen Litteratur im Mittelalter*.—Voigt—*Geschichte Preussens*, etc. In England, Hallam, Maitland, and others. In France, Guizot, and, not to mention a host of others, a learned writer, who, over the signature “Archéry,” has lately written a series of very learned and able articles on this subject, published in the *Annales de la Philosophie Chrétienne*, upon the treasures contained in which we shall draw copiously in this Essay. We shall also occasionally avail ourselves of Digby’s great work, “The Ages of Faith,” in which the reader will find everything on this, and almost every other subject—“gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, and stubble,” put

EARLY CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

From the earliest ages, schools and colleges grew up under the fostering care of the Church. The most celebrated were those of Rome, Alexandria, Milan, Carthage, and Nisibis. Who has not read of the brilliant Christian schools of Alexandria in the third century, where Christian youths, even amidst the darkening storm of persecution, were seen eagerly thronging the academic halls, to drink in the teaching which fell from the eloquent lips of the great Origen? Their ardor for learning could not be quenched, even by the blood of the almost numberless victims, who fell under the sword of a Decius and a Valerian. Who has not heard of the glory shed upon the schools of Carthage and Rome by the great St. Augustine, in the beginning of the fifth century? Though Africa was his country, yet this illustrious man preferred the schools of Rome, and he determined to reflect on this city the luster of his splendid talents. "The chief cause of my going to Rome," says he, "was my hearing that young men studied there more quietly, and that they were kept in order by a better discipline."⁸

PLATO AND ARISTOTLE

In these earliest models of Christian schools, sacred was justly preferred to profane learning; because the objects of the former were so much together with at least as much learning as order. This work is, in truth, an abyss of learning—*abyssus multa*.

⁸ *Confessions*, Bk. v.

higher and nobler. Yet the latter was also cultivated, but was made to shine with light borrowed chiefly from the former. Great men then thought, that human learning had attained its highest standard of excellence when its teachings were most conformable to the heavenly wisdom; when it reflected most the light of Divine Truth—of God. But to meet, on his own ground, the votary of mere human learning, the Christian scholar was compelled occasionally to descend from his lofty eminence, into the arena of the Platonic and Aristotelian philosophies. The result of this condescension was, however, rather to elevate pagan philosophy, than to lower the loftier standard of Christian wisdom. At that period, Plato had the ascendant over the Stagyrite, particularly in the School of Alexandria; the latter, however, almost entirely eclipsed his more brilliant rival during many subsequent centuries. The famous Medicean School of Florence, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, restored Plato to his preeminence; and F. Schlegel greatly prefers him to Aristotle.⁹ The Christian schools borrowed from both what seemed best to suit their purposes; and though exclusive partiality for Plato betrayed Origen and other professors into some errors and extravagances, yet the influence of the ancient philosophy, thus molded to the Christian standard, was generally highly beneficial. The Church allowed a reasonable latitude to her children, interposing her authority only when the precious deposit of faith was endangered.

⁹ In his "Lectures on the Philosophy of History."

IRISH SCHOOLS AND IRISH SCHOLARS

For three centuries after her conversion to Christianity, Ireland took the lead of all Europe in the cultivation and promotion of literature. From the middle of the fifth, to the middle of the eighth century, she carried on what might be called a crusade of learning throughout all Europe. While the tide of barbarian invasion was rushing over the continent, burying under its turbid waves the relics of ancient literature and civilization, the Emerald Isle was devoting the repose, which Providence then granted her, to the practice of religion, the founding of schools, and the cultivation of letters, both sacred and profane. The first of the northern nations to enter into the fold of Christ, she was destined to become one chief instrument in the hands of God for the conversion and civilization of the others. A brilliant light then shot up from Ireland, which illuminated the whole Western World. To give one instance of the flourishing condition of her institutions of learning during the period in question, it is well known, that the monastery of Benchor, or Bangor, contained no less than three thousand monks, besides scholars almost innumerable. Fired with enthusiasm, Irishmen visited almost every country in Europe, leaving behind them splendid institutions of learning and religion; for these two always went hand in hand. Irishmen established the monastery and school of Lindisfarne in England, of Bobbio in Italy, of Verdun in France, and of Würtzburg, Ratisbon, Erfurth, Cologne, and Vienna in Germany; to say nothing of their literary

labors in Paris, throughout England, and elsewhere.¹⁰

CATHEDRAL SCHOOLS

In England, the episcopal sees became special nurseries of learning.¹¹ The same may be said of these sees in general, throughout the Catholic world. Wherever a cathedral church was erected, there also a school, with a library attached to it, grew up under its shadow. This was not a mere chance: it was the natural tendency and result of the Catholic religion. Catholicity and literature always flourished together. It was also a matter of canonical enactment. Ecclesiastical councils—provincial, national, and general—made this the settled law of the Church during the Middle Ages. It would be tedious to allege all the decrees of councils bearing on this subject, which is referred to by nearly a hundred of them, held at different places, and at different times. We will only adduce a few of the more remarkable.

COUNCILS ORDERING THE ERECTION OF SCHOOLS

A council held at Rome, in 826, under the Pontiff Eugenius II, ordained that schools should be established throughout the world at cathedral and parochial churches, and in such other places as might be suitable for their erection. Towards the close of the eighth century, a council convened at Metz enjoined

¹⁰ For full particulars on this interesting subject, see Moore's "History of Ireland," vol. i. See also, *Annales de la Philos. Chrét.* Art. 7, *sup. cit.*

¹¹ Heeren, *Opp.* i. 65, who cites Henry's "History of England."

the obligation of erecting Catholic schools, to be conducted by the clergy living in common with the bishop. The Council of Mayence, in 813, ordered the clergy to admonish parents under their charge, that they should send their children to the schools established, "either in the monasteries, or in the houses of the parochial clergy."¹² We gather from this and many similar enactments, that schools were established not only at the cathedral, but also the parochial churches, as well as in the monasteries. The synod of Orléans, in 800, enacted, that the parochial clergy should erect schools in towns and villages, in order to teach little children the elements of learning: "Let them receive," this council adds, "and teach these little children with the utmost charity, that they themselves may shine as the stars forever. Let them receive no remuneration from their schools, unless what the parents, through charity, may voluntarily offer."¹³ As early as 529, the Council of Vaison had strongly recommended the erection of similar schools. A contemporary writer of the life of Bishop Meinwercus, represents the School of Paderborn, as "flourishing in both divine and human learning."¹⁴

CHARLEMAGNE AND ALFRED

The princes of the earth assisted the authorities of the Church in carrying out these benevolent in-

¹² *Concil. Moguntinum, Can. x.*

¹³ *Concil. Aurelian. An. 800, Can. xx.*

¹⁴ Digby's "Ages of Faith," vol. ii, pp. 112-13, American ed., where many similar facts are related.

tentions. Charlemagne, in one of his Capitulars, ordered the erection of schools at every cathedral church throughout his vast dominions, which extended over more than half of Europe. His successor, Lothaire I, in 823, promulgated a law, that public schools should be established in eight of the principal Italian cities, "in order that an opportunity might be given to all, and that there might be no excuse drawn from poverty, and the difficulty of repairing to remote places." Half a century later, Alfred the Great enacted similar laws in England. Thus, during the Catholic times, the Church and the State—bishops and kings—vied with each other in zeal for the erection of schools. They all felt that this was the best, if not the only remedy for European society, then torn by civil wars, or just emerging from the confusion caused by barbarian invasion. And if their good intentions were not always carried into effect, the impartial judge will admit that it was surely not their fault, but that of the evil times on which they had fallen. But for these noble exertions to restore learning, what would have saved Europe from hopeless barbarism? Even with all those efforts, the struggle between Christian civilization and northern barbarism, was long and doubtful. What would have been the result had not the Church interposed her powerful influence to stay the torrent?

We have seen the action of provincial and national councils favoring the erection of schools: we will now show that general councils, representing the whole Church, made similar enactments. A canon of the third general Council of Constantinople, in

680, commands priests to open schools in country places, and to receive gratuitously all children who could be induced to frequent them. The third general Council of Lateran was convened in 1179 by Alexander III, one of the greatest Pontiffs of the Middle Ages. It passed the following canon: "Since the Church of God, like a tender mother, is bound to provide for the poor, both in those things which appertain to the aid of the body, and in those which belong to the advancement of the soul; lest the opportunity for such improvement (*agendi et proficiendi*) should be wanting to those poor persons who cannot be aided by the wealth of their parents; let a competent benefice be assigned in each cathedral church to a teacher whose duty it shall be to teach the clerks and poor scholars of the same church *gratuitously*; by which means the necessity of the teacher may be relieved, and the way to instruction may be opened to learners. Let this practice be also restored in other churches and monasteries, if, in times past, any thing was set apart in them for this purpose. But let no one exact a price for granting permission to teach."¹⁵ Another great Pope of the Middle Ages, Innocent III, renewed this decree in 1215, and extended the law to parochial churches. Honorius III, and other Pontiffs, followed his example.

Thus, *free schools* were established throughout Christendom by the authority of the Roman Pontiffs,

¹⁵ See Cabassutius—*Notitia Concil.*, *in locum*. Digby (Vol. ii, p. 114) gives an imperfect synopsis of the decree, which however is marked as a translation of the canon. Besides, the marginal reference is incorrect, and without meaning.

and by that of general councils. The Church promoted learning through her visible head, and both in her distributive and collective capacity. And be it ever remembered, that all the schools above mentioned were established chiefly for the benefit of the common people and of the poor. In France alone, during those Ages, there were more than two hundred such schools and colleges.¹⁶

THE MONASTERIES AND MONASTIC SCHOOLS

The monasteries were powerful auxiliaries in the cause of education. Wherever they were established, the most barren waste was made to smile with verdure. Their retired situation, remote from the confusion and corruption of cities, adapted them in a peculiar manner to the purposes of education. The Christian youth could there drink to satiety of the pure waters of sacred and profane learning, far away from the turmoil of the world. His health was invigorated by the mountain or country air; his morals were preserved by the example and watchfulness of the monks; and both literature and religion became lovely in his eyes. In those troubled times of civil feud and bloodshed, the monasteries were asylums for learning—green spots on the surface of creation—which the foot of the spoiler seldom profaned. Who, that has read the history of the Middle Ages, has not felt refreshed in mind, as he revisited in spirit the monasteries of Cluny and Clairvaux; of Corbie and Bec; of Fulda and

¹⁶ For proof of this, see *Annales de la Philos. Chrétienne*, Art. 7, *sup. cit.*

Bobbio, not to mention a hundred other bright and favored spots! The shadows of St. Bernard, of Peter the Venerable, and of the Abbot Hugo, seem still to hover over those holy sanctuaries, and to hallow them by their presence.

WHAT WAS THEREIN TAUGHT

There were schools in all the principal monasteries. Some of these were for primary, and others for higher instruction. In the former, boys were taught the "Our Father," the Creed, the Psalms, plain chant, arithmetic and grammar. In the latter, the more elevated branches of learning were inculcated: music, mathematics, poetry, and the Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic languages. At that period grammar had a much more extended meaning than it has at present. It embraced, though perhaps in less perfection, what was afterwards denoted by the term *Humanities*, a full course of instruction in the Latin language, which was, during the greater part of the Middle Ages, that of the people, at least of all the educated, as well as of the Church and of the State. The laws and ordinances of France were published in Latin until the sixteenth century. Till the beginning of the thirteenth century, most of the famous monasteries in Europe were of the Benedictine order, whose services to literature cannot be over-estimated. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the Monastic Orders of St. Dominic and St. Francis covered Europe with schools, which were chiefly for the benefit of the poor. And there is no doubt that these last named Orders greatly

promoted the rise of letters, and thereby the advancement of civilization. Speaking of the cathedral and monastic schools of the Middle Ages, Hallam bestows upon them the following very faint and qualified praise:

The praise of having originally established schools belongs to some bishops and abbots of the sixth century. They came in place of the imperial schools overthrown by the barbarians. In the downfall of that temporal dominion, a spiritual aristocracy was providentially raised up, to save from extinction the remains of learning and of religion itself. Some of these schools seem to have been preserved in the South of Italy, though merely, perhaps, for elementary instruction. . . . The cathedral and conventional schools, created or restored by Charlemagne, became the means of preserving that small portion of learning which continued to exist. They flourished most, having had time to produce their fruits, under his successors, Louis the Debonair, Lothaire, and Charles the Bald.¹⁷

SCHOOLS FOR THE NOBILITY

Besides schools for the people, there were others, chiefly in the monasteries, for the special education of the children of the nobility and of kings. Meibom, a Protestant historian, assures us of this fact. "During the age of the Charles, of the Othos, and of the Henrys, the children of kings and dukes were placed at a tender age in the schools of the canons and of the monks, . . . that they might acquire a knowledge of the liberal arts, and of the languages."¹⁸ The chronicler of St. Requier, who lived

¹⁷ "Introduction to Literature," etc., 1, 27.

¹⁸ See Ziegelbauer, *Opp. tom. 1.* "Sub ævo Carolorum, Othonum, et Henricorum, regum ducumque liberi tenelli adhuc in canonicorum aut monachorum collegia amandabantur . . . ut liberalium artium et linguarum cognitioni assuefierent."

under the Carlovingian dynasty, tells us that in that abbey were educated one hundred youths, from the principal noble families of the empire. Charles Martel founded the College of Richenon for a similar purpose.

SIGNING IN CIPHER

The kings and princes of the Middle Ages were not then so ignorant as they are usually represented. Charlemagne and Alfred were both not only scholars, but magnificent patrons of learning. They were the Medici of the Middle Ages. The fact that many of the ancient diplomas and other public documents are signed with the cipher, instead of the name of a prince, is no conclusive evidence that the signer could not write his own name. This practice was often a matter of court etiquette, originating in the idea, more or less common at that time, that a prince should write with no other instrument than his sword.¹⁹ Those warlike nobles, clad in steel, did not much relish the old advice—*cedant arma togæ*.²⁰ When King Lewis *d'outre mer* laughed at Foulk of Anjou, for having sung in the choir with the other canons, Foulk answered bluntly: “*An illiterate king is a crowned ass.*”²¹ The same was said to Henry I of England by his father, the bluff William the Conqueror. This fact proves that ignorance was deemed disgraceful in a prince of the Middle Ages.

¹⁹ See *Nouveau Traité de Diplomatique*, p. 361, a learned work by the Benedictines.

²⁰ “Let arms yield to the gown—war to peace.”

²¹ *Rex illiteratus est asinus coronatus*.—Martène, *Collect. Ampliss.*, v. 987.

In the tenth century, St. Stephen of Hungary had his people taught the Latin language, which is still, to some extent, the vernacular of that country.

FEMALE ACADEMIES

The following fact may serve to show that ladies of rank also cultivated learning during the period in question. In the eleventh century, Ingulph, who was reared in the court of Edward the Confessor in England, informs us, that on returning every day from school, the Queen Egitha used to examine him in grammar and logic, and to encourage his progress by frequent presents. The nunneries did for the girls, what the cathedral, parochial, and monastic schools did for boys; and every class and both sexes were thus provided with ample means of education.²² The Latin language was understood by many of the religious ladies of the convents: their rules were mostly in that language; and many small works written in Latin by nuns of those ages are still extant.²³ They also occasionally cultivated the study of the Greek language, and of philosophy. Some nuns of England with their Abbess Liobe, a near relative of St. Boniface, the apostle of Germany, carried their learning into the latter country, and established schools there for the education of their own sex.²⁴ In the tenth century, Hroswetha, a nun of Gandersheim, wrote Latin poems, still ex-

²² The *Annales de la Philosophie Chrét.* has a special article (vi) replete with interesting details, on the learned females of the Middle Ages.

²³ See *Histoire Litter. de France*, Tom. ix. p. 129, *seqq.*

²⁴ Mabillon, *Prof. in Sæcul* iii, Benedict.

tant, on the foundation of her convent, and on the life of the Emperor Otho the Great, besides six dramas on ecclesiastical history. Though far from being so classical as the ancient models, yet these poems are of respectable merit; and they prove that in the institutions for learning at that day, even in the tenth century, classical literature was extensively and successfully cultivated, by women as well as by men.

LITERARY LADIES

Not only religious women, but ladies of the world also were not infrequently well educated. They received their education in the convents. St. Bernard, in the twelfth century, wrote letters in Latin to the wives of counts and barons. The convent of Roncerai at Angers was distinguished by the number of young princesses who were there educated. It was in this school that Héloïse learned Latin and philosophy. St. Gertrude, of Saxony (fourteenth century), extended her studies to the classics, to which she was so strongly attached as to feel scruples of conscience on the subject. She has left some pious historical works.²⁵ The Abbess Herrada of Alsace (twelfth century) wrote an extensive Encyclopedia,²⁶ which is still preserved in manuscript. Many other facts of a similar character might be alleged, to illustrate female education in the Middle Ages; but these will suffice.

²⁵ *Insinuationes D. Pietatis.*

²⁶ *Hortus deliciarum.*

UNIVERSITIES—IN ITALY

We now pass to the universities of the “Dark” Ages, many of which were fully organized in the twelfth century, and became so numerous and flourishing in that and the following ages as to excite our admiration and astonishment, even at this day of boasted enlightenment. The schools and colleges erected in the larger cities gradually swelled into universities, which received special charters of privileges from Popes and princes. These soon became *foci* of learning, which radiated the light of literature throughout every country of Europe. Their great number, and the vast multitude of young men from every part of Europe who flocked to them, prove most conclusively how great was then the thirst for learning. Here again Italy pioneered the way. The universities of Rome and Bologna soon became famous. Padua, Naples, Pavia, and Perugia, also had their universities. After the discovery of the Pandects of Justinian by the Amalfites, in the eleventh century, the study of the civil law was revived in Italy. The University of Bologna became, under Irnerius, or Werner, the great Law School of Christendom. Thousands of students from the remotest parts of Europe crowded its halls. Besides Italian youths, there were occasionally at this University no less than ten thousand foreign students. Padua, the *alma mater* of Christopher Columbus and of Amerigo Vespucci, had at one time no less than eighteen thousand students.²⁷ The other Italian universities were also in a highly flourishing condition.

²⁷ See Eustace’s “Classical Tour through Italy,” in 4 vols. 8vo.

IN ENGLAND

The other countries of Europe boasted also their universities, which rivaled those of Italy. England had her Oxford and her Cambridge. The schools, founded in these two cities in the ninth and tenth centuries, grew to be universities towards the close of the twelfth. The reign of Henry II was the Augustan Age of English medieval literature. Anthony Wood, the Protestant historian of the Oxford University, informs us that, during Henry's reign, it counted thirty thousand students!²⁸

IN SPAIN AND FRANCE

Spain was not behind the other Catholic States of Europe. She improved on the scientific discoveries of the Arabs, who, during their long rule over her most beautiful provinces, had established many flourishing schools, and made many discoveries in medicine and mathematics. To them all Europe was much indebted for the impulse which their example and successful industry gave to these studies. The literary boon which they bestowed on Europe was not, however, without its poison. They paid at least as much attention to the study of alchemy, of necromancy, and of astrology, as to that of the useful sciences. They wasted as much time and labor on the discovery of the philosopher's stone, as they spent in cultivating the sciences of arithmetic, medicine, and astronomy. To their influence, we have no

²⁸ *Athenæ Oxonienses.* The famed School of Athens never had so many scholars.

doubt, Europe was mainly indebted for the importance attached to these foolish studies by many of her Christian literati.²⁹ Besides the celebrated Universities of Salamanca, Valladolid, and Alcalá, Spain could boast of twenty-four other colleges of less celebrity. In addition to the universities already enumerated, there were various schools of medicine in Spain, at Salerno in the South of Italy, and at Montpellier and Paris in France. These also gave a great impulse to the development of European literature and civilization.

The influence of the universities of the Middle Ages was not confined to the mere imparting of learning. They kept up a constant intercourse in society, at a time when the masses had far less communication than at present. They excited the emulation of noble youths, and opened to them a path to eminence and glory far more lofty than the battle-field, which had been hitherto almost their only incentive to exertion. They thus exercised a humanizing influence on the manners of an age essentially warlike. There was room, too, for the exercise of a species of chivalry in the intellectual tilting matches of the schools, no less than in the more exciting and less refined tournaments where mailed knights broke their spears against each other, in pursuit of glory. Post-offices arose from the necessity of regular communication, which the uni-

²⁹ I cannot subscribe to the opinion of Andres (*Storia di ogni Lett.* vol. i), who enters into an elaborate course of reasoning, to prove that Europe owed to the Arabs almost all her valuable discoveries in the Middle Ages. He was a Spaniard, and perhaps his partiality for his country inclined him to attach too much importance to Hispano-Arabic influence on the rise of Letters.

versities with their vast number of foreign students created. The young men who had studied law at Bologna, Paris, and Oxford, on returning to their homes, excited in the minds of their countrymen an ardor for such studies. Besides, with their increased knowledge, they contributed greatly to improve the jurisprudence of their respective countries.

Thus civilization received a powerful stimulus from the universities. The streamlets, which issued from these fountain-heads of literature, irrigated and fertilized all Europe. They were sources,

Whence many rivulets have since been turned,
O'er the garden Catholic to lead
Their living waters, and have fed its plants.³⁰

STATEMENT OF DANIELO EXAMINED

In a learned Catholic magazine, published monthly in Paris, we find an interesting review of a work on the University of Paris, lately published by J. Danielo.³¹ This distinguished author has written other excellent works manifesting deep research into the history of the Middle Ages. Not the least interesting of these publications, is his "History of Queen Blanche," the sainted mother of St. Louis IX. From the review just mentioned, we select the following details connected with our present subject:

"We can form no idea at the present day," says M. Danielo, "of the importance and of the numbers of the University of

³⁰ Dante. *Parad. xvii.*

³¹ The work is entitled: *Etudes Littéraires, Philosophiques et Morales sur l'Université de Paris, et sur le progrès de l'esprit humain au Moyen-âge*, or, "Literary, Philosophical and Moral Researches on the University of Paris, and on the Progress of the Human Mind in the Middle Ages." The Review alluded to is found in the number of the *Université Catholique* for February, 1842.

France towards the close of the twelfth century. Rendered illustrious by Peter Lombard, St. Anselm, William de Champeaux, and Abeillard, it had already become the light and the rendezvous of the learned, and the resort of students from all Europe. The Holy See loved and protected it, as a cherished daughter, as its faithful shield and champion. It was the glory of the Western World and of France, and no institution in all Christendom was its equal. Athens and Alexandria, according to the testimony of contemporary writers, never had schools so numerous, or so brilliant. In fact, the number of university students often exceeded twenty-five thousand! . . . The kings of France were as zealous to foster its growth, as were those of neighboring States to diminish its patronage. These employed every kind of intrigue to dissolve this great and illustrious body, and to cause the remnant of its students to pursue their education within their own territory. For this purpose they instituted universities at great expense; they endowed them with lands and privileges; they offered all kinds of inducements to students. But their efforts proved abortive. In spite of the prohibition of the Emperor Frederick, students continued to flock to the University of Paris from Germany, as well as from England and Italy. We should remark that this university, besides the advantages of its location, was very accessible and very hospitable. The students soon became acclimated in Paris; and after having completed their studies, it was easy for the most talented to obtain professorships, and we accordingly find more than one professor from Germany, Italy, and especially England, filling with distinction the various chairs. Add to this, that nearly all the celebrated men, and many of the Popes, bishops and abbots, of that period, were *élèves* and admirers of the University of Paris; many of them too had been among its professors, and respectfully called it their mother."

We have no doubt that the above account is substantially correct, though we are disposed to think, that the ardent partiality of the Frenchman has in one or two instances betrayed him into no little exaggeration. Though the French university was highly distinguished, yet it had many rivals, which equaled, if they did not surpass it, both in the number of their students, and in the learning and fame

of their professors. Not to speak of others, those of Bologna in Italy, and of Oxford in England, could boast at least equal antiquity and celebrity. The former had the merit of reviving the study of the civil law under the great Werner; and as a law school, both for the civil and the Canon Law, it long continued unrivaled. The latter under Henry II of England, whose reign commenced about the middle of the twelfth century (1154), reckoned thirty thousand youths among its students, a number which that of Paris never perhaps surpassed. The statement, that "nearly all the celebrated men" of that epoch were students of the Paris University, must also, we have no doubt, be received with many grains of allowance. "The glory of the Western World and of France," had laurels enough already, without snatching at those which decorated the brows of her fair sisters in Germany, Italy, Spain, and England.

CURIOS INCIDENT IN THE HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PARIS

With twenty-five or thirty thousand young men from all nations within its walls, it was natural to expect that Paris during the Middle Ages should become occasionally the theater of riot, growing out of contentions between the students and the citizens. If we are to credit contemporary history, the former often equaled the latter in number. M. Danielo gives us, from Roger de Hoveden, an English historian of the time, a graphic account of one of those outbreaks, which resulted in the famous charter of rights granted to the University by Philip Augustus,

in 1200. It seems that the German students of that day liked their social glass, almost as much as their successors in the German universities do at the present time. One of them, the son of a nobleman, sent his servant to a tavern to purchase wine. The servant, it appears, misbehaved, and was chastised by the tavern-keeper; and in the encounter, the flask of wine was broken. The German students felt aggrieved both in their honor and in their stomachs. They assembled in great numbers, repaired to the tavern, forced its doors, and severely chastised the landlord, leaving him half dead. The citizens of Paris, indignant at this severe retaliation of the students, assembled, and led on by Thomas, the provost of the city, an armed mob assaulted the hotel of the German students. In the conflict which ensued, the young German nobleman and several of his comrades were killed.³² The heads of the University repaired in a body to Philip Augustus, king of France, and complained loudly of this violence. The king at their instance took signal vengeance on the provost and his accomplices; and to protect the students, as well as to prevent similar outrages in future, he granted to the University an ample charter of privileges, which, among other things, exempted it from the jurisdiction of the provost and of the civil courts, and made it amenable only to the ecclesiastical tribunals. Under this charter, the University continued to flourish for several centuries. But half a century later, its prosperity received a temporary check from Queen Blanche and

³² In all fifteen, says the preamble of the charter, given us in full by M. Danielo.

St. Louis IX. The Pope, however, soon interfered, and, by his influence with the French court, succeeded in having all the privileges of the University restored.

The reason of the withdrawal of the charter by the sainted king and queen mother of France, was probably a zeal for the Catholic Faith, which one or two of the professors made an effort about that time to undermine. The French university, though generally "the faithful shield and champion" of the Church, was occasionally tarnished with heresy, which did not, however, affect its entire body, but was confined to a few of its professorial chairs. The pride of learning and the habit—encouraged by the Aristotelian philosophy—of defending both sides of every question for the sake of argument, had already betrayed Gilbert de Porée and Abeillard into many errors and extravagances; and even the great "master of the sentences," Peter Lombard, had not, it was thought, wholly escaped the contagion. But the professors who, in the thirteenth century, were betrayed into the greatest excesses, were Simon de Tournai and Amaury. The blasphemies of the former, and the signal punishment which overtook him in the midst of them, are so remarkable, that we will give the account of them in full, as furnished us by the caustic Benedictine monk, Matthew Paris, a contemporary English historian. M. Danielo calls him the "best historian of the thirteenth century," to which measure of praise we can scarcely subscribe.

A certain professor of Paris endowed with great genius and a strong memory, having for two years taught the *Arts*, that is

the *Humanities*, with great success, directed his attention to theology, in which he made such progress in a short time, that he soon filled with distinction the chair of that faculty. He taught with great ability, and disputed with still greater subtlety. His pleasure consisted in handling difficult questions hitherto unheard of, and in resolving and explaining them with elegance and clearness. He had as many hearers as the largest palace could contain. One day, having discoursed very subtly of the Trinity, and having brought forward the most profound reasons for this dogma, he was obliged to defer the conclusion of the argument until the following day. All the students of theology in the city were advised of this; and, being eager to hear the solution of so many apparently inexplicable questions, they crowded to his famous school in mass. The professor, taking his seat, began by stating in order all the questions he had hitherto treated; and those which seemed to everybody unfathomable, he explained with so much clearness, elegance, and orthodoxy, that all his hearers were in amazement.

After this wonderful explanation, those of his disciples who were most familiar with him, and most eager for instruction, begged him to repeat his questions and answers, that they might be able to take a copy of them under his dictation; representing to him, that it would be an indignity, as well as an irreparable loss, to suffer the light of so much science to be extinguished. But he, inflated with pride, raised his eyes to heaven, and with an insolent laugh, exclaimed: “*O Jesule! Jesule!* Little Jesus! Little Jesus!! How much have I confirmed and exalted Thy law in this dispute! But with how much stronger reasons could I not abase, weaken, and destroy it, should I wish to be malicious, and take the matter to heart!” Having said this, his tongue failed, and he remained without speech. Not only he became mute, but an idiot, and radically stupid. He did not teach or discourse any more; he became the laughing-stock of all who were acquainted with the fact. Two hours afterwards, he was not able to distinguish the letters of the alphabet. But the Divine vengeance which weighed on him having become a little mitigated, his son, by dint of repetition, succeeded in teaching him the *Pater Noster*, and the *Credo*, which he learned by heart, and repeated stammering; but this was all. This miracle confounded the arrogance, and repressed the boasting, of many among the scholars and professors. “This fact,” concludes the historian, “was witnessed by Nicholas Duffy, who was afterwards Bishop of Dublin,

a man of great authority, who stated it to me, and requested that I should relate it, that it might not be forgotten by posterity.”³³

THREE QUALITIES OF MEDIEVAL SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES STATED AND ESTABLISHED

We will conclude this paper, by briefly adverting to some of the distinguishing characteristics of schools and universities in the Middle Ages. These may be reduced to three: (1) their erection was prompted by religion and charity; (2) they were generally *free*, and all could frequent them without expense; and (3) without excluding mere human learning, they yet attached far greater importance to sacred studies. We have recognized many of these features in the facts already alleged; but some additional illustrations may not be wholly useless or devoid of interest.

1. Nothing is more certain, than that religion presided over the erection of those splendid institutions of learning. No other motive could have caused the raising up of so many brilliant literary establishments. Whoever has studied the history of those Ages of Faith, must have observed, that religion and Divine charity were then the most powerful stimulants to exertion. All other motives were comparatively powerless. To rear institutions, where the poor—the favorite members of Jesus Christ—might imbibe literature hallowed by religion; to cause

³³ Matthew Paris, *Historia Maj. Angliae*, ad. an. 1201. See also Bulæus, *Hist. Universit. Paris.* Tom. iii. p. 8. Another Historian, Thomas de Cantimpre, likewise a contemporary, substantially confirms the statement of Matthew Paris. He states that the blasphemy of Simon consisted in comparing Jesus Christ with Moses and Mohammed. (Bulæus, *ibid.* p. 9.)

souls redeemed by the blood of Christ to be trained to virtue and learning—this was then deemed the noblest use to which money could be applied. The founders of those schools did not court human applause; it was glory enough for them, if in the eyes of heaven “they could shine like stars forever”; or if, in consideration of their pious bequests for education, God would vouchsafe in His mercy to blot out their sins. “We wish,” says St. Benedict, the founder of the illustrious Order which bears his name, “to institute a school *for the service of the Lord*, and we hope that we have not placed anything sharp or painful in this institution.”³⁴

Beraudière, Bishop of Perigueaux, founded a seminary for poor scholars in his own city, and stated in dying, that he had left to posterity his book, his church rebuilt, and this seminary for the poor. “May gracious heaven grant,” he adds, “that posterity may receive great utility; and may God vouchsafe pardon for my past sins!”³⁵

The child’s advancement in virtue was then the greatest object of the parent’s solicitude. Eginhard writes to his son, who was at the School of Fulda: “But above all, learn to imitate those good morals in which he [your teacher] excels; for grammar and rhetoric and all other studies of liberal arts are vain, and greatly injurious to the servants of God, unless by the Divine grace they know how to be subject to virtue; for ‘science puffeth up, but charity edifieth.’ I would rather see you dead than abounding in vice.” St. Anselm of Canterbury, employed

³⁴ *Præf. ad Regulam—in fine.*

³⁵ Gouget, xvi, 13, *apud* Digby, vol. ii, p. 134.

similar language, in writing to his nephew *Anselm*.³⁶ The school-rooms of the monasteries at Rome and Bologna were sanctuaries of piety; the student always beheld in them an image of that Immaculate Virgin who was ever the patroness of Christian scholars. In fine, not to multiply facts, whoever will study the history of those schools, will not fail to remark that religion always prompted their erection, and presided over their destinies. Every exercise was commenced and terminated by prayer.³⁷

2. Instruction in most of those schools was wholly gratuitous. This was particularly true of the seminaries of Rome, and of almost all the cathedral, parochial, and monastic schools, erected by order of ecclesiastical councils. This beautiful feature in education during the Middle Ages was a necessary consequence of the spirit of Christian charity, which then prevailed, and which, as we have just seen, was the main spring of literary exertion. Teachers in those days wished for no emoluments, but the smiling approval of God! Bishops, kings, and emperors left immense legacies for the gratuitous education of the poor. Leopold, Archduke of Austria, employed his wealth in founding numerous seminaries of learning, which he committed to the charge of pious and learned monks. Pope Urban V supported more than a thousand students at different academies, supplying them also with books. The celibacy of the clergy did more for the erection of schools for the poor than perhaps anything else. Clergy-

³⁶ *St Anselmi, Opp. Lib. 4, Epist. 31.*

³⁷ For these beautiful prayers recited before and after the scholastic exercises, see *Digby*, vol. ii, pp. 123 and 135.

men whose income exceeded their expenses, felt bound by the spirit, if not by the letter of the Canon Law, to appropriate the surplus to charitable purposes, among which the principal was the founding of hospitals and schools. The forty-four colleges attached to the University of Paris were most of them founded by clergymen, prompted thereto by religious and charitable motives.

WHO FIRST FOUNDED FREE SCHOOLS?

The greatest boast of this age is the founding of common and free schools. Catholicity was the real foundress of such institutions. Money is now necessary for everything—it is the great, almost the only motive of action. Teachers will not labor without remuneration. Free schools cannot be established now, unless the community be heavily taxed for their support. It was not so in the good old Catholic times. Christian charity was a coin which then circulated freely, supplying the place of money. *Alas! Charity hath grown cold!* Even the poor must now be supported by taxation! *Alas!* for the spirit of the Ages of Faith!

3. Many Protestant writers have asserted that nothing but scholastic philosophy and theology was taught in the schools and universities of the Middle Ages. No assertion could be more unfounded. True, those sciences which spoke of heavenly things and of God, were more warmly cherished; but mere human learning was not neglected. The great Alcuin wrote to Charlemagne, from Tours, where he was teaching: “According to your exhortations and good

desire, I apply myself to minister to some, under the roof of St. Martin, the honey of the holy Scriptures. Others I endeavor to inebriate with the old wine of *ancient learning*; others I begin to nourish with the apples of grammatical subtlety. Some I try to illuminate in the science of the stars, as if of the painted canopy of some great house; I am made many things to many persons, that I may edify as many as possible, to the advantage of the holy Church of God, and to the honor of our imperial kingdom.” Roger Bacon applied successfully to the study of the practical sciences; and in the thirteenth century he made many brilliant discoveries, which would do honor to this age. Albertus Magnus wrote an extensive treatise on natural history, in which he embodied all that was valuable in the works of Aristotle and Pliny, adding many discoveries of his own. These are a few out of a hundred examples that might be alleged, to prove that human science was cultivated in the “Dark” Ages. In all the universities mathematics and physics were taught, as well as metaphysics and theology.

CHAPTER V

INFLUENCE OF CATHOLICITY ON CIVIL LIBERTY

TERMS DEFINED

THIS subject should be approached with clear ideas on its nature, as well as with certain fixed principles to guide us in our investigation. These principles are contained in the title placed above, as in a germ, and we cannot, perhaps, better introduce this paper, than by a brief definition of the words of which it is composed.

WHAT IS LIBERTY?

Liberty, especially with its qualification, *civil*, is not an absolute, but a relative term. It has no fixed nor determinate meaning, whether we regard its etymology or its general acceptation among mankind. It implies, in general, *some* exemption from external restraint; but the amount of this exemption, as well as the *quantum* of restraint compatible with liberty, can be determined by no absolute standard. What is called liberty in one age, and under one set of circumstances, would be called slavery in another, and in a new order of things. Two extreme cases are, however, excluded by the meaning generally attached to the term: that of

complete external restraint, which we call slavery, and that of no restraint whatever, either on person or action; which latter, though it may be thought to exist in the untrammeled savage of the forest, never has existed *de facto*, and in the nature of things never can exist, in any well-organized civil society. Between these two extremes, the meaning of the term varies according to times, persons, and circumstances.

WHICH IS THE BEST FORM OF GOVERNMENT?

The variety of government implies some restraint on individual liberty. The compact, express or implied, between the governor and the governed, necessarily supposes some sacrifice of personal freedom on the part of the latter for the general good of the body politic. The extent of this sacrifice must be determined by the character of the people to be governed and by reflection on the great end of all civil governments, which is to secure to the governed, the possession of life, honor and property. And without venturing to pronounce definitely on a question, which has been so long agitated among the most civilized nations of the earth, we may safely say, that the form of government, which combines the proper security of these great objects with the greatest amount of personal freedom, is the best in theory as well as in practice. In accordance with this principle there can be no doubt, that, whenever the character of the people can bear it, a well regulated democracy is preferable to all other forms of government. But while a predilection for our own

cherished institutions is thus founded on reasoning from first principles, the liberal mind will not be led into the vulgar error of condemning too harshly every other form of civil polity. Each may be good in its place, and in reference to the people for whom it is appointed. Governments, like garments, must suit the persons for whom they are designed.

DIRECT AND INDIRECT INFLUENCE

When we speak of the *influence* of Catholicity on civil liberty, we are not to be understood as implying that this influence is always direct, or that it is a primary object of our holy religion. Christ did not come to decide the complicated problems of human governments; His mission had a higher, a holier purpose. He came not to pronounce on the political differences existing among mankind, but to establish a Divine system—a kingdom not of this world—into which were all admissible, no matter under what form of government Providence might have cast their lot. One cannot be a good Christian without being a good citizen; and all that our blessed Saviour is recorded to have said on this subject, is that remarkable answer of His to the scribes and Pharisees: “Render, therefore, unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s.”¹

But if Christianity was not intended to have a direct influence on civil governments it at least has had a most powerful indirect one. By elevating and ennobling man’s nature, by dissipating the errors of his mind, and expanding the affections of his

¹ Matt. xxii.

heart, it has necessarily promoted even his earthly happiness, and improved his social condition. By slow but steady degrees it has broken the fetters of the slave and of the captive, and prepared mankind for full and perfect liberty. The emancipation of mind and heart from the slavery of error and sin was a primary object of the Christian religion, expressed in those words of Christ: "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."² This higher freedom once secured, man was naturally led to break other bonds. Christianity thus threw upon earthly things a light reflected from heaven, and pointed triumphantly to the great "City of God," as more than realizing all the brightest visions of human freedom and happiness!

The influence of Catholicity on civil liberty may be viewed in a twofold light: the one theoretical, the other practical. The former is that of her doctrines and government; the latter, that of her external action on society. We will endeavor to show that, under both aspects, this influence has been favorable to the development of free principles, and to the progress of civil liberty.

TENDENCY OF CHRISTIAN TEACHING—DIVISION OF THE SUBJECT—THEORETICAL VIEW—EQUALIZING THE SOCIAL CONDITION

I. Though the Divine Founder of the Christian Church did not intend to interfere with civil governments, yet the tendency of His doctrines was to equalize the social condition of mankind, to exalt the

² John viii. 32.

humble, and to humble the proud. His was a religion which solaced and raised up the poor; and taught those in power to bear their honors meekly, and to remember that all Christians are equal before God, with whom "there is no exception of persons." The Church founded by Christ has ever been guided by these principles. She has always proclaimed the truth, that all mankind were born alike "children of wrath,"³ and that by Baptism they all become equally "children of God." With her "there is neither gentile nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free; but, Christ is all, and in all."⁴ The prince and the beggar, the princess and the poorest peasant girl, kneel side by side in her most stately temples, all reduced to the same level of humble suppliants for mercy! The pew system, which establishes distinctions in churches, is a modern invention unknown to Catholic times, and still unknown in Catholic countries. St. Peter's Church, with pews, would present a spectacle, blending strangely the sublime and the ridiculous. It would be something like the Englishman's project, to have the front of that magnificent temple painted and penciled in the modern style! In this, and in every other respect, the Church has fully carried out the intentions of her Divine Founder; she has ever been the mother of the poor, and the com-fortress of the afflicted. Christ neglected the rich and mingled freely with the poor; she has caught His spirit, and, in every age, has imitated His example; as we trust to show in the sequel.

³ Ephes. ii. 3.

⁴ Coloss. iii. 11.

FORM OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT—A HAPPY BLENDING
OF DIFFERENT ELEMENTS

The analogy of these principles with those embodied in our Declaration of Independence must be manifest to every reflecting mind; while their influence on the social condition could not be otherwise than favorable to the development of free principles, as well as destructive of tyranny. Nor was this tendency neutralized by the form of Church government. It is not necessary to inquire, whether this be monarchical, aristocratical, or democratical, or, a blending of the three. Suffice it to say, that, as its objects are widely different from those of any human government, so its nature is also widely different. To preserve His followers in unity of faith and worship, and to unite them into one compact body, Christ instituted a form of government, the best calculated to secure these ends; and, at the same time, compatible with every condition of human society. These objects are entirely spiritual and supernatural, and the form of government, though external, is accordingly marked by the same qualities. The arms of the Church are not carnal, but spiritual. Her “kingdom is not of this world,” and, therefore, cannot be incompatible with any worldly government.

THE ELECTIVE PRINCIPLE

Though we cannot, for the reasons indicated, draw an exact parallel between her form of government and those of civil society, yet, we might be warranted

in saying, that the former combines all the excellencies of the latter, without their defects. It is an elective monarchy, an aristocracy of merit, and a democracy without party factions. Every Christian man, no matter how lowly, is eligible to the highest offices in the Church. Many of the Popes have been chosen from the lowest walks of life. The late Pontiff was an example of this. His merit alone raised him from an humble situation in a small village of northern Italy, Belluno, to the highest honors of the hierarchy. And, as an illustration of this same principle, we may remark here, by the way, that of the forty-one Pontiffs, who during the last three hundred years have occupied the chair of St. Peter, only five have been Roman citizens; and that, during the same period, very few Popes have been elected from princely families. The same remark applies to the body of Cardinals, who in general receive their honors solely as the award of merit and learning. Nor do the four or five, out of seventy, selected from noble families, form an exception to this remark. Not to speak of others, every one has heard of the eminent virtues and transcendent merit of the late sainted Cardinal Odescalchi.

The elective principle, differently modified according to circumstances, has also been applied in every age of the Church to the second great order of the hierarchy, the Bishops. In Catholic countries, where the requirements of the Canon Law can be complied with, they are usually elected by the clergy or chapter, according to certain established forms. In this country, and in some others, the election, or rather presentation of candidates, is made by the bishops

of the metropolitan province, in accordance with a canon of the great Nicene Council, held in 325. If the approval and action of the Holy See are necessary, before any election can take effect, it is to secure unity of government, and to prevent the intrusion of unworthy members into the hierarchy. So far was this elective principle carried during the first ages of the Church, that, in many cases, the people had a voice with the clergy in the election of their bishops; more, however, it must be confessed, as witnesses of the qualities of the candidate, than as regular electors. Thus we read, that St. Ambrose and St. Augustine were chosen bishops by the clergy and people of Milan and Hippo. Factions and other inconveniences attending this mode of election caused its gradual abolition, and the substitution of other safer forms; but the spirit and practice of the Church have nevertheless always inclined her, in the election of bishops, to consider not only the qualities of the candidate, but also how far he might prove acceptable to the flock to be committed to his charge.

DELIBERATIVE ASSEMBLIES

Another essential feature of democracy, is the decision of all matters of importance in deliberative assemblies. The Church has exhibited this feature as strikingly as any republic; and she has presented the oldest and best models of such assemblies. From the councils held by the Apostles, mentioned in the Acts, down to that of Trent, in the sixteenth century, she has constantly applied this principle, in regard both to the decision of controversies on doctrinal

points, and to statutes of discipline. Not only does it pervade her whole history, but it ramifies throughout her entire body, spread over the surface of the earth. It is exhibited in diocesan synods, held annually in each diocese, for the regulation of local discipline; in provincial councils held every three years, in accordance with the decree of the Tridentine Council; in national councils held at stated intervals, for the regulation of national discipline; and in general councils, which meet only during the greatest emergencies of the Church. That the disciplinary statutes of all these various deliberative assemblies may be in harmony with the general laws of the Church, they cannot take effect without the approval of the Holy See; which in this, as in every other respect, is thus an effective center of unity, and the great conservative principle of the Church.

AUTHORITY OF THE POPE

It has been said, that the authority of the Pope is absolute and despotic. No charge could be more unfounded. It is true that he derives his authority immediately from Christ, who gave to him, in the person of Peter, full power to feed the sheep as well as the lambs of His entire flock (John xxi). It is true, also, that this power is ample enough to meet every emergency that may arise. But it is equally true that it is necessarily limited by its own nature, and by the objects it was instituted to promote. It can do everything, in its own appropriate sphere, and for the edification of the body of Christ; out of its own province, and for destruction, it is powerless.

The exercise of the Pontifical power is variously restrained by the decrees of general councils, the enactments of the Canon Law, and the force of precedent. Whatever opinion may be entertained about the theory, the practice of Papal authority has ever been regulated by these fixed principles. The wisdom and consistency of the Court of Rome, and its rigid adherence to precedent, not only in the substance, but also as to the very form of its decisions, are well known to the world. Even Protestants with the most violent prejudices have been forcibly struck by this fact, and sadly puzzled to account for it to their own satisfaction. The Pope usually decides nothing without consulting his counselors, the College of Cardinals, and seldom determines anything against their advice. Though the cases are not in every respect parallel, yet in viewing the manner of procedure adopted by the Roman Court, we are forcibly reminded of our President and Senate. The Congregations, or committees of Cardinals for various purposes, correspond to the standing committees of the Senate; and in the former, matters are discussed with as much patience and ability, to say the least, as in the latter.

PRACTICAL INFLUENCE OF THE CHURCH

II. But, as theories, however specious, might be thought to mislead us, we come at once to what must be deemed decisive in the matter, the *practical* influence of Catholicity upon civil liberty. And, a mere glance at the different epochs of Church History, in connection with the corresponding phases of society,

will suffice to show us, what that influence has been, how it has promoted civilization, and, at least indirectly, developed the democratic principle.

IN THE EARLY AGES

1. The Church was so trammelled and oppressed by the Roman government, during the first three centuries of her existence, that her influence on society during that period could neither be fully exerted, nor extensively felt. Still, though crushed and bleeding, she spoke with a voice which raised up and comforted the poor and the persecuted, and either softened the heart or struck terror into the bosom of the persecutor. In the second century, Tertullian could already appeal to the immense number of Christians in every part of the Empire, as an argument to prove the utter impotency of tyranny, and as a powerful inducement to stay the arm of persecution. The vast body of early Christians were from the lowest walks of life; these were exalted by the Christian profession; and there is no doubt that the social condition of this order in the fourth century, when Christianity finally gained the ascendancy, was vastly more elevated than it had been under the old Roman Empire. Immense numbers of slaves had been emancipated, and the higher orders of society had already learned to look on the hitherto despised lower classes as their equals in Christ Jesus. In the fourth century we find the Church employing her newly acquired influence on civil society, for the mitigation of despotism, and the vindication of the oppressed. At Milan, we behold

an Ambrose refusing Communion to the great Theodosius, who, in an evil hour, had ordered a massacre of his people in the streets of Thessalonica, without distinction of guilty and innocent. This stain of blood was washed out only by a public penance, such as the lowest member of the Church would have been constrained to undergo for a similar offense. In the East, we see a Chrysostom rebuking, with all his burning eloquence, the vices of an empress; and, though his life was the forfeit of his courage, his blood still cried aloud against vice in high places, and *the people* raised a monument to his memory! We say nothing of an Athanasius, of a Hilary, and of various Roman Pontiffs, who, during the fierce days of Arianism, had the courage to suffer for the Faith, and to tell the truth to those emperors, who, before their conversion to Christianity, had been worshiped as gods, but were now to be taught, that they were but weak, erring men.

IN THE MIDDLE AGES—RESCUING EUROPE FROM
BARBARISM

2. When the Roman Empire fell, and the successive hordes of the heathen or Arian Northmen overran Europe, for more than two centuries spreading desolation in their course, the Church alone saved the world from barbarism. Like the ark of old, she rode triumphant amid this second deluge of waters, bearing in her bosom the sacred seeds of civilization, which, when those dark waters should subside, she was again to scatter broadcast on the surface of the earth. Not only this, but she was to water them with

her tears and her blood, was to cherish their growth, and to gather the abundant fruit they would yield, "for the healing of the nations." From the fifth to the tenth century, she successfully labored for the conversion of the Northmen, and during this period she had the consolation of seeing them enter, nation by nation, within her pale. Meantime she sought by various means to soften their fierceness, to improve their legislation, and to diminish the evils of the feudal system, which they had brought into Europe. The bloody strifes which this system occasioned, were mitigated by the famous "Truce of God," which enacted, that out of reverence to the Lord's Passion and Resurrection, all hostilities should be suspended from the evening of Wednesday to the morning of the following Monday.⁵ She gradually abolished the absurd and superstitious ordeals by fire and water, and substituted for them more rational forms of trial. She raised her voice against the cruel sacrifice of life in the joust and tournament, by enacting a severe canon against such pageants.⁶

MEANS EMPLOYED FOR HUMANIZING SOCIETY

To shield the oppressed, and to protect the persecuted in those days of bloody feuds, she established the privilege of asylum, and declared, that whoever sought refuge near the altar of God should be free from the attacks of every enemy. In one word, she

⁵ For a beautiful explanation and illustration of this regulation see Dr. Wiseman's "Lectures on the Holy Week," delivered at Rome.

⁶ See Can. xx of the third Lateran Council, held A. D. 1179, under Alexander III.

did all that was possible under the circumstances, to ameliorate the social condition of mankind; and if she did not fully succeed according to her wishes, it was not "her fault," but "that of the times." Though, amidst the din of arms and the confusion of society, her voice was not always heard, yet when heard it was generally respected. In fact, hers was the only authority that was generally reverenced during the period in question; and if she had not interposed it, no human power could have saved Europe from complete barbarism. By averting this overwhelming evil, she made it *possible* for Europe to be free; and this argument alone would prove that all the subsequent advancement of Europe in civilization and in liberal government, is to be ascribed to *her* influence, as to its source.

TWO PROTESTANT TESTIMONIES

As an able American Protestant writer candidly acknowledges:

Though seemingly enslaved, the Church was in reality the life of Europe. She was the refuge of the distressed, the friend of the slave, the helper of the injured, the only hope of learning. To her, chivalry owed its noble aspirations; to her, art and agriculture looked for every improvement. The ruler from her learned some rude justice; the ruled learned faith and obedience. Let us not cling to the superstition, which teaches that the Church has always upheld the cause of tyrants. Through the Middle Ages she was the only friend and advocate of the people, and of the rights of man. To her influence was it owing that, through all that strange era, the slaves of Europe were better protected by law than are now the free blacks of the United States by the national statutes.⁷

⁷ *North American Review*, July, 1845.

Another Protestant writer gives the following opinion of the influence which the Catholic Church exercised on civilization, especially during the Middle Ages:

A desire of corporate security, and a vague notion of an imperial majesty, an absolute and sacred power vested in an individual, were the bequests of ancient times to the Middle Ages. Christianity, or rather reverence for the Church, was the most powerfully formative opinion of modern civilization, and here it is especially necessary to distinguish between the institution and the ideas on which it was founded. The antiquities of clerical organization need not now be investigated; it is sufficient to say, that the Christian Church, before it was established by Constantine, had a fixed system of government with a due subordination of parts, and that, when Christianity became the established religion of the empire, the clergy at the same moment became an organized and recognized political body. In the decay of municipal institutions, the bishops and priests succeeded to the influence of the civic magistrates, not by usurpation, but by the sheer pressure of circumstances, possessing the additional advantages of irresponsibility—for their offices were deemed sacred and inalienable. From the fifth to the ninth century, the barbarian elements of force and violent movement were predominant, because horde followed horde, as wave follows wave, and one race of the conquerors had scarcely established itself in a country, when it was forced to make room for another. But amid all these changes and convulsions, the Church remained firm and unshaken; like a gallant vessel in the stormy ocean, it rode proudly over the billows, and, though it sometimes bowed before a sudden burst of the tempest, it instantly rose again in all its pride and all its security.

The Church was the first permanent establishment of modern Europe; for four centuries it alone maintained the struggle against barbarism: it preserved the memory of municipal freedom and Roman majesty in temporal government, and actually established the system in spiritual affairs; and, by working on ignorance, superstition, and barbarity, by means too closely adapted to the materials of the operation, it obtained a mastery over the energies of the Northern tribes, and not unfrequently the guidance and direction of their movements. Such a power was legitimated not merely by continuance but by its usefulness, and

from the Church, temporal authority was almost at the outset forced to borrow its sanctions and derive its legitimacy.

It is needless to describe feudalism, or point out its inherent tyranny and injustice: but that it was necessary in its age is indisputably proved by its universal adoption in every European country nearly at the same time; the first consequence of the system was a transfer of the influence of the towns to the country, and the almost total extinction of municipal institutions, the last relic of ancient civilization. It was apparently a retrogradation to anarchy; it was subversive of all social security and happiness; but it fostered the growth of individual prowess. The chivalrous virtues, such as they were, sprung from feudalism; the chivalrous literature, by which these virtues were exaggerated and the accompanying vices concealed, was the child of the same parent, and for many centuries has thrown a bright veil over the horrors of its origin. Feudalism was the worst foe to social order, because it was equally opposed to the sovereignty of the monarch and the liberty of the people. Could it have held its position, Europe must have sunk into barbarism; but it had to oppose a powerful principle—the influence of the Church. In the eleventh century the Papacy fought the battle of freedom and civilization.

It was under the pressure of the feudal system that the organization of the Papacy was completed and defined; there is no part of the Romish creed, not one of the Romish institutions, that was not of the utmost importance in the great struggle it had to maintain: and of the doctrines and practices on which the nineteenth century passes just sentence of condemnation (!) there is scarcely one that could have been spared seven hundred years ago, without imminent peril to the great cause of human civilization and social happiness. By its numerous gradations of rank, the Church of the Middle Ages linked itself to every class of society; its bishops were the companions of princes; its priests claimed reverence in the baronial hall; its preaching friars and monks brought consolation to the cottage of the suffering peasant. When the distinction of caste was rightly established in every other form of social life, the Church scarcely knew any aristocracy but that of talent; once received into Holy Orders, the serf lost all traces of his bondage; he was not merely raised to an equality with his former lord, but he might aspire to dignities that cast those of temporal princes into the shade.

Before we pass sentence on an institution, we should examine the opinion on which it is founded; and before we judge of the opinion, we should know the circumstances by which it was en-

gendered. The public opinion of Europe in the eleventh century was represented by a truly great man, Hildebrand, or, as he was called after his accession to the chair of St. Peter, Gregory VII. It has been the fashion to describe this prelate as a species of moral monster, the enemy of all improvement. There is no doubt that a Pope possessing anything like his influence, who would propose and strive to enforce the same measures in the nineteenth century that Gregory did in the eleventh, might justly be regarded as one of the worst despots that ever existed, and furthermore as one of the most blundering tyrants that ever disgraced humanity; there is just as little, indeed rather less doubt, that in his own age every one of these measures counteracted some evil principle, and helped to work out an antagonizing principle of civilization. Gregory VII was a reformer as well as Luther,⁸ he used despotic means, but there were no others at his disposal; he was nearly in the ecclesiastical world what Charlemagne and Peter the Great have been in the political; he wished to reform the Church and by means of the Church to reform civil society, to introduce into both more morality, justice, and order; he did not live to see the triumph of his principles, but he prepared the way for the rule of his successors. The theory of Hildebrand's system was beautiful; it apparently based supreme power upon intelligence, and concentrated both in the Church.⁹

SLAVERY AND THE SERF SYSTEM

3. The influence of the Church had already done much towards mitigating, and gradually destroying that odious feature, common to every form of ancient pagan society—domestic slavery, by which the vast body of mankind had been held in bondage to a few who alone could claim the right of citizenship.¹⁰ She now set about abolishing that form of slavery which had been introduced by the Northmen, and

⁸ Every reader of history will know how to draw the line of distinction between Luther and Gregory VII; Luther reformed from high to low, Gregory, from low to high.

⁹ *The Foreign Quarterly Review.*

¹⁰ See, for a full development of this interesting topic, Balmes, "Catholicity and Protestantism Compared," ch. xv, and following.

which was intimately blended with the feudal system. Under this polity, the vast body of the people were called serfs, and could be bought and sold with the soil to which they were attached. With this abject class, the Church sympathized most deeply. Like her Divine Founder, she has ever viewed the poor as her favored children. But, in this as in everything else, she proceeded slowly and cautiously, knowing that every great beneficial change, designed to affect whole masses of population, must be the work of time. Without violence—without any sudden shock of the social system—she slowly, but surely effected her object, and serfism was gradually abolished, wherever her voice could be heard. Under the influence of her humanizing principles and mild legislation, the condition of the serfs was gradually improved; until, the way having been thus wisely prepared, the system disappeared altogether from European society. To show that the social elevation and subsequent emancipation of the serfs were mainly due to the Catholic Church, a very striking fact may be alleged. The only country in Europe where the serf system still exists in all its debasement, is Russia; which, long torn by schism from the Catholic Church, has always resisted her influence in this respect, with as much blind obstinacy as she has done in the matter of the Gregorian calendar.¹¹

¹¹ For a full and satisfactory account of the present moral, social and religious condition of Russia see De Maistre, “*Du Pape*,” vol. ii, where he enters into this subject at length. Even Voltaire, that implacable enemy of the Popes, awards them much praise for their agency in mitigating and abolishing the serf system; though here, as elsewhere, his quotations are not always reliable. *Essai sur les Mœurs*, ch. lxxiii.

STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE CROSS AND THE CRESCENT

4. After having thus rescued Europe from barbarism and domestic servitude, the Church was destined to save her from a still more appalling evil—the subversion of her independence by a foreign religioso-political despotism. The followers of Mohammed, after having overrun Asia and Africa, entered and subdued Spain in the year 711. In 732 their victorious armies had penetrated to the very heart of France; and, though in the famous battle of Tours, fought in this year, Charles Martel, with his French troops, utterly discomfited them, yet their spirit of conquest was not broken by the overwhelming defeat. Recovering from its effects, they became masters of the Mediterranean Sea in the tenth century; and they had already established a piratical colony in the South of France, and had twice ravaged Rome itself, before the year 906.¹² They subdued Sicily, and other important islands in the Mediterranean; and Spain being already in their possession, they threatened Constantinople in the East, while the whole southern frontier of Europe was open to their incursions. Europe, thus menaced with a foreign yoke, which already weighed heavily on the necks of half the world, was in no condition to repel invasion. Broken into fragments by the feudal system, and torn by petty wars, she could not expect to cope with the immense united host embattled against her under the crescent.

¹² See Muratori, *Annali di Italia*, *ad an. 906*, etc. Also Hallam's "Middle Ages," ch. i, p. 25.

In this emergency, the Church and the Popes came to the rescue; and whoever will read history aright, must see that it is mainly to their influence that Europe is indebted for her independence and, with it, for all her social advantages over other countries. That master stroke of policy, which, by means of the Crusades, carried the war into the enemy's country, and for two centuries made Palestine the battle ground of the world, kept off the threatened invasion, and preserved Constantinople, the great bulwark of Europe in the East, for centuries; and, while it gave the Mohammedans enough to do at home, it allowed Europe time to breathe, and to prepare for the coming struggle. And yet, with all this preparation for the final contest, Europe still proved almost unequal to it, after the Turks had taken Constantinople, in 1453. For more than two centuries after this event, not only her peace, but her very independence, was threatened by the Turks. The Popes were always at the head of the league for repelling Turkish invasion; and the glorious result of the famous sea-fight at Lepanto in 1571, which destroyed the Turkish fleet, and drove the Ottoman flag from the Mediterranean, is mainly to be ascribed to the exertions of the sainted Pope Pius V. As late as 1683, the Turkish army was under the walls of Vienna, and that city was saved only by the timely appearance of Sobieski and his thirty thousand brave Poles, invited to the rescue by Pope Innocent XI.

THE CRUSADES—THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE SOCIAL CONDITION

5. But the Crusades did more than to secure the independence of Europe. To them, more perhaps than to any other cause, are we to attribute the social improvement of mankind, and the rise of free institutions. They united Europe in one great cause, they impaired the feudal system and consolidated government, they rid Europe of many petty despots who were firebrands in the heart of society; they elicited enterprise, stimulated commerce, fostered industry, and cherished mechanical skill, by opening a market in the East to the products of European industry. Many of our greatest inventions, and among them, that of gunpowder and the mariner's compass, date back to the period of the Crusades. But what is still more to our present purpose, they raised the lower classes, and gave importance to the cities. The Free Cities of the Middle Ages—those first nurseries of free principles—owed their origin and their privileges mainly to the startling events connected with those expeditions. At least, this is true in regard to those of Italy, which during these excursions into Palestine, became the commercial carriers of Europe.

THE FREE CITIES

The limits of this essay will allow but a rapid view of the Free Cities of the Middle Ages; and we will speak chiefly of those of Spain, Germany, and Italy. Of those of France, M. Guizot, a Protestant, treats

at length, in his late singular lectures "On Civilization in Modern Europe."¹³

IN SPAIN

If we except those of Italy, the Cities of Spain were the first in Europe which received charters of privileges. These they obtained from various Spanish monarchs, for military services rendered, or to be rendered the State, in the long contest with the Moors for national independence. As early as the year 1020, Alfonzo V granted a charter of rights to the City of Leon. Sancho the Great and Alfonso VI, in the same century, extended similar privileges to many other cities. These charters, or *fueros*, allowed them to elect their own city council, judges and other municipal officers, and to send deputies to the Cortes of the kingdom. We read of many cities sending their deputies to the Cortes in the year 1169. From the reign of Alfonso IX in 1188, we have constant mention "of a great number of deputies from each city."¹⁴ In the Cortes of Burgos, in 1315, there were present one hundred and ninety-two delegates from ninety different cities; and in that of Madrid, in 1391, one hundred and twenty-six deputies attended from fifty cities.¹⁵

The Spanish monarchs had *no right to levy taxes*,

¹³ M. Guizot belongs to that modern school of philosophers, called *eclectics*. In discussing history, he takes both sides of almost every question, and in many instances it would require a wizard, or a diplomatist like himself, to define his real position.

¹⁴ In the old Spanish of that day, "*muchedumbre de embiados de cada ciudad*."

¹⁵ For the original authorities, see Hallam's "Middle Ages," chap. iv, p. 200, *et seq.*

without the consent of the people duly represented in the Cortes. In granting a supply to Henry III in 1393, the Cortes required, "that he should swear before one of the archbishops, not to take or demand any money, service or loan, or anything else of the cities or towns, nor of individuals belonging to them, on any pretense of necessity, until the three estates of the kingdom should be duly summoned and assembled in Cortes, according to ancient usage. And if any such letters requiring money have been written, *that they shall be obeyed, but not complied with.*"¹⁶ Mr. Hallam admits, that "The civil rights of rich and poor in (Spanish) courts of justice were as equal as in England."¹⁷

The Church exercised a great and even direct influence in bringing about this development of the democratic principle in Spain. The ecclesiastical councils, and especially those of Toledo, constituted the basis of all Spanish jurisprudence; and the old Spanish civil laws were published in the ecclesiastical collections.¹⁸ The councils of Spain, as of many other countries of Europe, during the Middle Ages, were often mixed assemblages of bishops, nobles, and deputies from cities; and they often decided on temporal as well as on spiritual matters. This fact is a key to many of the difficulties connected with Church History during that period. The fourth Council of Toledo enacts, that "On the death of a king, the princes of the kingdom, together with the

¹⁶ "*Obedecidas, y non cumplidas.*" In refusing, the Cortes still maintained that lofty style of deference for their sovereigns, which has ever marked the Spanish character.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 201.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 206. See also Guizot's "Lectures," etc.

clergy, shall elect his successor by common consent.”¹⁹

From all these facts, we gather: first, that Spain, during the Middle Ages, was in possession of these great democratic principles: exemption from taxation without the consent of the people, free and full representation of popular interests in the national Cortes, and an elective monarchy; and secondly, that the Church was mainly instrumental in securing to her these precious advantages. Her liberties began to decline in the sixteenth century, under Charles V and Philip II; and one great cause of the declension, was the supposed necessity of strong measures of precaution against the civil commotions occasioned by the Reformation in other countries of Europe. By the way, it is rather a singular fact, that civil liberty should have declined in every country of Europe in the sixteenth century. Even Guizot admits this.²⁰

IN GERMANY

In Germany, the cities of Worms and Cologne acquired political importance under Henry IV, A. D. 1076. His successor, Henry V, granted enfranchisement to the artisans in various other cities of the Germanic Empire. The citizens were classed according to their respective employments.²¹ Fred-

¹⁹ “*Defuncto in pace principe primates tatus regni una cum sacerdotibus successorem regni communi consilio constituant.*” See Marina, *Teoria de las Cartes*, tom. ii, p. 2; and *Id. Ensayo Politico*, etc., chap. lxvi; and Hallam, *ibid.*, p. 206.

²⁰ See Guizot’s “*Lectures*,” p. 300, *et seq.*

²¹ See Schmidt, *Geschichte*, etc., tom. iii, p. 239, *et seq.* quoted by Hallam, chap. iv, p. 238-9.

erick I granted a charter to the city of Speier in 1188, and various other German cities began to elect their own municipal officers, and to have a voice in the Diet of the Empire, after this date. In the thirteenth century, they became more opulent and still more independent. The three orders of electors, princes, and deputies from cities, took their respective places in the Diet of Frankfort in 1344. The provincial states of the Germanic Empire had also their own privileges, and they managed their own local affairs. The great fundamental principle of medieval jurisprudence in Germany, was that "*No taxes were to be levied on the people without their own consent.*"

IN ITALY—LOMBARD LEAGUE

In Italy, as we have already intimated, the Free Cities obtained importance during the Crusades, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The Popes were their principal protectors; while the emperors of Germany viewed their growing liberties with an evil eye. In a diet held at Roncaglia in 1158, Frederick Barbarossa endeavored to wrest from them their privileges, and to subject them to the German yoke. The cities rebelled, but they were soon reduced to subjection by the armies of Frederick, who, to strike terror into the Italian mind, caused the city of Milan to be razed to the ground, in 1162. But he was disappointed in his expectations. The principal cities of Lombardy united in the famous Lombard League, in 1167; and their inhabitants swore that they would either maintain their liberties, or be buried beneath

²² See Hallam, *ibid.*

the ruins of their houses. Pope Alexander III was at the head of this league; and when the decisive battle, fought near Legnano, in 1176, had been won by the Italians, the Pope was the principal negotiator on the part of Italy in the treaty of Venice in 1177, which secured to them their liberties. The grateful people built the city of Alexandria, in honor of their illustrious patron.²³

ITALIAN REPUBLICS

In the Free Cities of Italy, the democratic principle was developed more fully than in those of any other part of Europe. They became, in fact, independent and regularly organized republics. Was it because they were more immediately under the influence of the Church, and of the Popes? Certain it is, that the Popes contributed much to their origin, and greatly fostered their growth. Under *their* auspices, Venice, Genoa, Florence, Pisa, Sienna, Brescia, Bergamo, and Milan became a bright galaxy of free governments. And though their light was subsequently obscured by the clouds of faction, yet most of them continued to shine throughout the Middle Ages; and two of them, Genoa and Venice, lingered above the horizon, though with diminished luster, almost until our own day.

GUELPHS AND GIBELLINES

6. The fierce and bloody factions of the Guelphs and Ghibellines contributed, perhaps more than any other cause, to mar the prosperity of Italy, during

²³ See Hallam's "Middle Ages," chap. iii, p. 134-5. Also Muratorii, *Dissert.* 48, *Antiq. Medii Aevi*.

the period of which we are speaking. To them chiefly, are we to ascribe the decline and downfall of many of the Italian republics. These factions originated in Germany, after the death of the Emperor Henry VI, in 1197. Two aspirants, Philip, Duke of Swabia, and Otto, Duke of Saxony and Bavaria, maintained a long and bloody contest for the imperial crown. The former belonged to the family of the *Ghibellini*; and the latter to that of the *Este-Guelphi*. Both families were originally from Italy, where they were still numerous and influential.²⁴ The contest between them raged even more fiercely, and for a much longer time, in Italy than in Germany itself. In fact, the greatest political misfortunes of Italy, in every age, have arisen from her having been drawn into the vortex of German politics, and having become, against her will, the theater of war for all Europe. These bloody factions continued to disturb her for many centuries. The Guelphs advocated the independence of Italy; the Ghibellines sought to fasten on the neck of the Italians the imperial yoke of Germany. It was but a renewal of the old contest, which had given rise to the Lombard League, and birth to the Italian republics. During all this protracted struggle, the Popes were found ranged on the side of the Guelphs; and they thus exerted all their influence to promote Italian liberty. Can any one blame them for so doing? What right had Germany to crush Italian liberty? Voltaire himself applauds them for their course,²⁵ and he says

²⁴ See Muratori, *Antiquit. etc., Dissert.* 41. for a full account of these "diaboliche fazioni," as he calls them.

²⁵ *Essai sur les Mœurs*, tom. i, chap. xxxvii and xlvi, and tom. ii, chap. xlvi.

that the destruction of Milan by Frederick Barbarossa would of itself "suffice to justify the Popes for all they did."²⁶ We may here remark, in general, that the Popes during the Middle Ages, having been necessarily drawn by the circumstances of the times into European politics, used their influence, almost without an exception, for checking tyranny, and maintaining the rights of the people. And the more we fathom the interesting history of that period, the more shall we become convinced of this great leading fact.

THE DEPOSING POWER

7. This is in nothing more apparent, than in their long struggle with the German emperors;²⁷ and in the exercise by them of what is called the deposing power. We care not to inquire, whether the Popes had this power in virtue of their sacred office, or merely through the consent and concession of the people and princes themselves, who often invoked it in their behalf. One thing is certain, every exercise of it was a blow aimed at tyranny, and struck for the rights of the people. In deposing a prince, the Pope simply declared, that he had broken his solemn engagement to his people—to govern them in accordance with justice; and that they were in consequence freed from all obligations to him, growing out of their oath of allegiance. The claim of

²⁶ *Ibid.*, tom. ii, chap. lxi.

²⁷ The Germanic empire was styled the *Holy Roman Empire*. Voltaire (*ibid.*) with his usual caustic wit, and with unusual truth, remarks that this was a complete misnomer: "*It was neither Holy, nor Roman, nor Empire.*"

the deposing power necessarily supposed the doctrine of a contract, express or implied, between the king and his people; the former binding himself to protect their rights, and to govern them justly, and the latter, *under this condition only*, pledging to him their allegiance. Every exercise of the power kept this doctrine fresh in the memory of the people, and thereby greatly contributed to the unfolding of the democratic principle. Had the Popes labored in a similar way to recall to a sense of duty many other despots of that period, the heart of every patriot would leap with joy. The circumstances which gave rise to this power having ceased, nearly three hundred years since, the claim to it has been abandoned.

REPUBLICS OF SAN MARINO AND ANDORRA

8. Of the old Catholic republics, two yet remain, standing monuments of the influence of Catholicity on free institutions. The one is imbosomed in the Pyrenees of Catholic Spain, and the other is perched on the Apennines of Catholic Italy. The very names of Andorra and San Marino are enough to refute the assertion, that Catholicity is opposed to republican governments. Both of these little republics owed their origin *directly* to the Catholic religion. That of Andorra was founded by a Catholic bishop,²⁸ and that of San Marino, by a Catholic

²⁸ A little after the beginning of the ninth century, Louis le Débonnaire, the successor of Charlemagne, ceded the territory of Andorra to the Bishops of Urgel. These exercised a very mild feudal sovereignty over the republic for many centuries; but the real authority was by them permitted to be exercised by two Syndics, or governors, elected by a council of twenty-four members, who were them-

monk, whose name it bears.²⁹ The Bishops of Urgel have been, and are still, the protectors of the former; and the Roman Pontiffs of the latter.³⁰ Andorra

selves chosen by the people of the six principal towns of the republic. The Bishop of Urgel now exercises only a spiritual jurisdiction over Andorra; even the loose authority growing out of the feudal system, having ceased with the last remnant of that system in Europe, more than fifty years since.—See Malte Brun's *Geography*.

²⁹ Towards the close of the third century, the Emperor Diocletian determined to rebuild the city of *Ariminum* or Rimini, which had fallen to ruins. For this purpose, he invited from Dalmatia, his native country, a number of mechanics and architects. His invitation was accepted, and, in the language of the historian of Rimini, (Clementini, *Raccolto Historico, infra cit.*) “*Venne ad Ariminum un gran numero di architetti, scalpellini, o, diciamo tagliapietri, e muratori, e con essi un' infinita d' operai Schiavoni*—There came to Ariminum a great number of architects, stone cutters and masons, and with these an infinite number of Slavonian workmen.” Among these was one Marinus, a man of excellent character and a fervent Christian. Rimini was soon restored to more than its ancient glory. But in 303 Diocletian's partiality for this city was turned into hatred, on account of the vast number of Christians who lived within its walls. In the bloody persecution which he raised against the Church, the streets of Rimini “flowed with rivers of Catholic blood, not to earth but to heaven.” (Clementini *infra cit.*) Marinus, with the miserable remnant of the slaughtered Christians, fled to the neighboring heights of Monte Titano, where he gave himself up to prayer and penance. His reputation for wisdom and sanctity, as well as similar persecutions, brought great numbers of his countrymen and of Italians to his place of retreat; and thus was laid the foundation of the Republic of San Marino, named after its founder, who also gave his name to Monte Titano. Marinus attended a council held at Rimini early in the fourth century; he is styled in its acts *Diaconus*, or deacon. He died in a good old age, towards the close of that century; his body was buried on the mountain, and miracles were said to have been wrought at his tomb. His ashes are now preserved in the church of San Marino, the principal one of the republic, where there is over the high altar a statue of the saint, holding in its hand the figure of a mountain crowned with three towers, the coat of arms of the republic. (See Clementini; also Matteo Valli, *infra cit.*)

³⁰ For a full account of the republic of San Marino, see *Dele' Origine e governo della repubblica di San Marino, di Matteo Valli, secretario e cittadino di esso repubblica* (Padova, 1633). Also Clementini, *Raccolto istorico della fondazione di Rimini*, 2 vols. 4to. Rimini, 1617. When Cardinal Alberoni, about a century ago, sought

has continued to exist, with few political vicissitudes, for more than a thousand years; while San Marino dates back her history more than fifteen hundred years, and is, therefore, not only the oldest republic in the world, but perhaps the oldest government in Europe. The former, to a territory of two hundred English square miles, has a population of fifteen thousand; while the latter, with half the population, has a territory of only twenty-one square miles. Both of them are governed by officers of their own choice; and the government of San Marino in particular, is conducted on the most radically democratic principles.

The legislative body consists of the council of sixty, one-half of whom at least are, by law, to be chosen from the plebeian order; and of the *Arrengo*, or general assembly, summoned under extraordinary circumstances, in which all the families of the republic are to be represented. The executive is lodged in two *capitanei regyenti*, or governors, chosen every six months, and holding jurisdiction, one in the city of San Marino, and the other in the country—so jealous are these old republicans of placing power in the hands of one man! The judiciary department is managed by a commissary, who is required by law to be a foreigner, a native of some other part of Italy, in order that, in the discharge of his office, he may be biased by no undue prejudices resulting from family connections.³¹

to reduce this little republic under the temporal sovereignty of the Pope, the Pontiff disapproved of his design, and restored to the republic its ancient privileges.

³¹ An anecdote, current in Italy, will serve to show how justice is administered at San Marino. A merchant of Venice visited the

When Addison visited the republic in 1700, he "scarcely met with any in the place who had not a tincture of learning."³² He also saw the collection of the laws of the republic, published in Latin, in one volume folio, under the title: "*Statuta illustrissimæ reipublicæ Sancti Marini.*" When Napoleon, at the head of his victorious French troops, was in the neighborhood of San Marino, in 1797, he paused, and sent a congratulatory deputation to the republic, "which expressed the reverence felt by her young sister, France, for so ancient and free a commonwealth, and offered, besides an increase of territory, a present of four pieces of artillery." The present was gratefully accepted, but the other tempting offer was wisely declined!

THE MONASTIC INSTITUTE

9. The monastic institute, as we have seen, laid the foundations of the republic of San Marino in the fourth century; it subsequently did more for civil liberty, by furnishing the best models for free institutions. In the beginning of the thirteenth cen-

republic to collect a debt from one of its citizens, who had delayed or declined payment. He was conducted to the chief justice, whom he found in a large vat, treading out grapes for wine with his naked feet. He stated his case, without much hope of receiving payment. The justice immediately summoned the delinquent debtor, who acknowledged the debt, but pleaded inability. The indignant judge, however, immediately decreed that his house should be sold to meet the demand. To prevent this, the citizen soon produced the amount of the debt, and the Venetian returned home, well satisfied with his journey. Having afterwards witnessed the delays and chicanery of the Venetian courts, he exclaimed: "*Vale piu un pistad' uva di San Marino, che dieci parruchoni di Venetia!* One grape-trader of San Marino is worth more than ten big-wigs (judges) of Venice!"

³² See Addison's "Letters from Italy."

tury, arose the two religious Orders of St. Francis and St. Dominic, furnishing the Church, as a late eloquent writer³³ has well said, with its two greatest arms of defense, *poverty* and *eloquence*. The forms of government which these men established for their respective Orders contained many elements of democracy. The General of the Franciscans was elected for four years, and that of the Dominicans for six years.³⁴ The local superiors were also elected for a certain term of years; and in each society rules were made to prevent the too frequent election of the same individual. The monks were ever the friends of the lower classes, and they did much to elevate their condition in society. Born themselves in general among the poor, and having made a vow of poverty, their sympathies were naturally with the poor. Mingling constantly with the people, and entering into all their wants, their word and example exercised a most humanizing influence on the rude state of society during the Middle Ages.

TEACHING OF MEDIEVAL THEOLOGIANS

10. If any doubt remain as to the favorable influence of Catholicity on civil liberty, it would be dispelled by the express teaching of the theologians, writing in accordance with the principles and the spirit of the Church. Not to extend this paper too

³³ Lacordaire, "Apology for the Order of St. Dominic."

³⁴ This, at least, is the rule at present in the Dominican Order; originally it was different, the General having been elected for life. The change, however, took place at an early period in the history of the Order; we believe, in the thirteenth century, under St. Raymond de Pennafort, who was General in 1238.

much, we will confine ourselves to the authority of the great St. Thomas Aquinas, who, as a theologian, has perhaps had greater weight in the Catholic Church than any other man. His testimony may also show us, what were the general sentiments of the schoolmen in the thirteenth century, when he wrote. Speaking of the origin of civil power and the objects of law, he lays down these principles: “The law, strictly speaking, is directed primarily and principally to the common good: and to decree anything for the common benefit, *belongs either to the whole body of the people, or to some one acting in their place.*”³⁵ He pronounces the following opinion as to the best form of government: “Wherefore the choice of rulers in any State or kingdom is best, when one is *chosen for his merit to preside over all*, and under him are other rulers, *chosen for their merit, and the government belongs to all, because the rulers may be chosen from any class of society, and the choice is made by all.*”³⁶ One would think that he is hearing a democrat of the modern stamp, and yet it is a monk of the Dark Ages! Many other testimonies of similar import might be cited, but these will suffice.³⁷

MAGNA CHARTA

11. With these principles generally received, and with the other influences noticed above steadily act-

³⁵ *Summa Theol.* 1. 2. 1. *Quæst. Art. iii, Resp.*

³⁶ *Ibid., Quæst. cv., Art. 1.*

³⁷ For a fuller exposition of what the leading Catholic divines have taught on the nature and limits of civil government, see Balmes, *sup. cit. ch. xlii. seqq.*

ing on society, we cannot wonder at the rapid development of the democratic principle in the thirteenth and following centuries. Were the Catholic bishops and barons, who wrested *Magna Charta* from the hands of the tyrant John, on the famous plain of Runnymede, in 1215, enemies of civil liberty? And yet, that great charter of English rights, which secured trial by jury, fixed courts, taxation only with the consent of the people, and *habeas corpus*, contained no new provisions; it was but the revival of a charter one hundred and fifty years older, granted by Edward the Confessor, and discovered in the archives of London by that great champion of English liberty, Cardinal Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury.³⁸

WILLIAM WALLACE AND ROBERT BRUCE

12. The good old Catholic times produced patriots and heroes, of whom the present age might well be proud. William Wallace, defeated at Buscenneth, fell a martyr to the liberty of his native Scotland in 1305. Robert Bruce achieved what Wallace had bled for not in vain—the independence of his country. He won, in 1314, the decisive battle of Bannockburn, which resulted in the expulsion of the English invaders from Scotland. Are the Hungarians, and Poles, and Spaniards, and French, who fought for centuries the battles of European independence against the Saracens and Turks, to be set down as enemies of freedom? Are the brave knights of St. John, who so heroically devoted them-

³⁸ See Hurter's "Life of Innocent III," etc., vol. ii, p. 686.

selves for the liberty of Europe at Rhodes and at Malta, also to be ranked with the enemies of human rights?

WILLIAM TELL

13. Who will stigmatize as lovers of despotism the brave heroes, William Tell, Fürst, Werner, and Melchtal, who, at the head of four or five hundred Swiss, fought the Battle of Morgarten in 1307, and drove back an invading army of twenty thousand Austrians? And yet these brave men, who laid the foundation of the Swiss Republic, were all Roman Catholics; and in nobly asserting the cause of freedom, they surely did not act in opposition to their principles as Catholics.

INFLUENCE OF THE REFORMATION ON LIBERTY— IN GERMANY

14. And still, in the face of all these facts, and of many others which might be alleged, we are to be told that Catholicity is the friend of despotism, and the sworn enemy of republican government! And that, forsooth, all our free institutions are to be ascribed to the Protestant Reformation! If this be so, is it not a *little* strange that wherever Protestantism appeared in Europe, and especially wherever it gained the ascendency, the democratic principle was weakened, and the arm of monarchy strengthened? Yet this fact is incontestable. Where now are the liberties of Germany, established by her people, and recognized by her emperors and princes, in the

Middle Ages? What has become of the great democratic principle so generally received during that period, that the people are not to be taxed without their own consent? What has become of the representative system, by which each city and province of the Empire had a voice in the general diet? These have all vanished. The fate of Germany is now decided, not by the voice of her once free people, but by the swords and bayonets of her immense standing armies. These constitute the *ultima ratio* assigned by her emperors and kings for any laws they may choose to enact! And it must be confessed that this reason, if not altogether satisfactory, is at least conclusive. Where are now the Free Cities of Germany, once so famous? Alas! they have dwindled down to two or three, and these shorn of half their honors!

Whence this great change in her social condition? Our vision must be very dull indeed, not to perceive that it occurred in the sixteenth century; and that the revolution, called the Reformation, caused it in some places, and occasioned it in others. The political excitement, and the bloody wars to which that revolution gave rise, afforded an excellent opportunity to the German princes to grasp at absolute power. Amidst the agitations of society, they seized on the golden prize thus offered to their ambition, and bore it off triumphantly! And did the Protestants of Germany resist these pretensions? On the contrary they favored them. Though they were clamoring for liberty, and struggling for emancipation from what they were pleased to call a religious despotism, yet they tamely yielded their political

rights to the first despot who espoused their cause, and offered to protect them in their religious innovation! They gave themselves up, body and soul—bound hand and foot—to a *real* in order to escape an *imaginary* despotism! We confidently appeal to the whole history of that period, to show that this is no exaggeration, and that the picture is not even too highly colored. M. Guizot, a Protestant, and a historian of great weight, expressly asserts “*that the emancipation of the human mind, [by the Reformation] and absolute monarchy triumphed simultaneously throughout Europe.*”³⁹ And if he had not admitted it, standing monuments would fully attest the fact. Every Protestant kingdom on the continent of Europe has been since the Reformation, and is still, an absolute despotism! Every one of them has an established religion, and recognizes in the king absolute power, civil and ecclesiastical! Many of them, as Prussia, for example, are military despotisms, in which every citizen is bound to military service!

The Protestant Reformation is directly responsible for all this; for it certainly caused all these political evils, wherever it gained the ascendency. It indirectly occasioned political changes of a similar character in most other countries of Europe. To preserve themselves from the social disturbances, which the Reformation had caused wherever it had made its appearance, Catholic princes adopted rigid precautionary measures, and their subjects, under

³⁹ “*Lectures on Civilization in Modern Europe,*” p. 300, *et seq.* Though he admits this fact, yet he labors, strangely enough, to show that Protestantism emancipated the human mind and originated free institutions! So much for modern electricism.

the excitement of the times, willingly resigning a portion of their liberties in order to enable their princes to ward off the threatened evil, the Catholic governments of Europe became, many of them, absolute monarchies. These influences contributed much to produce the effects just named in the Catholic governments of Austria, France, Spain, and Portugal.

IN ENGLAND

In England, the Reformation crushed the liberties of the people, transmitted to them by their Catholic ancestors, and embodied in the Catholic *Magna Charta*. The tyrant Henry VIII trampled with impunity on almost every privilege secured by that instrument. Royal prerogative swallowed up every other element of government, both civil and religious. The king was everything, supreme in Church and State; the Parliament and the people were nothing, a mere cypher. This state of things continued, with the brief and troubled interval of Cromwell, or of the *soi-disant* “commonwealth” excepted, until the revolution in 1688—a period of one hundred and fifty years.

And what did the revolution effect? It did no more than restore to England the provisions of her Catholic *Magna Charta*, which instrument, during the three hundred years preceding the Reformation, had been renewed and extended at least thirty times.⁴⁰ The glorious revolution indeed! It

⁴⁰ See a series of very able articles in the *Dublin Review*, under the title, “*Arbitrary Power, Popery, Protestantism*,” republished in a

did no more than repair the ravages committed by Protestantism on the British constitution during the previous one hundred and fifty years, and to restore that constitution to its ancient Catholic integrity. It did not even do this to the fullest extent; for it refused to grant protection and the most unalienable civil privileges to the Catholic body, to whom the British were indebted for the *Magna Charta*, and their glorious constitution. Nor was this body emancipated from political slavery until 1829, one hundred and forty-one years later; and then the act was passed with a bad grace, nor was it full in its measure of justice, the tithe system and other intolerable evils still remaining unrepealed!

CATHOLIC PATRIOTS DURING THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

15. We might bring the subject home to our own times and country, and show that the Catholics of the colony of Maryland were the first to proclaim universal liberty, civil and religious, in North America;⁴¹ that in the war for independence with Protestant England, Catholic France came generously and effectually to our assistance; that Irish and American Catholics fought side by side with their Protestant fellow-citizens in that eventful war;⁴² that the Maryland line which bled so freely

duodecimo volume by Mr. Fithian; where this and many similar facts are proved by incontestable evidence.—*Dublin Review*, Nos. xv, xviii, xix.

⁴¹ See Bancroft's (Protestant) "History of the United States," vol. i, "Colony of Maryland."

⁴² See a letter of General Washington to Charles Carroll of Carrollton and Bishop Carroll, written in March, 1790; in which he bears honorable evidence to this fact, alleging it as a reason why Catholics

at Camden with the Catholic Baron De Kalb, while Gates and his Protestant militia were consulting their safety by flight, was composed to a great extent of Catholic soldiers; that there was no Catholic traitor during our Revolution; that the one who periled most in signing the Declaration of Independence, and who was the last survivor of that noble band of patriots, was the illustrious Catholic, Charles Carroll of Carrollton; that half the generals and officers of our Revolution—Lafayette, Pulaski, Count de Grasse, Rochambeau, De Kalb, Kosciusko, and many others, were Catholics; and that the first commodore appointed by Washington to form our infant navy was the Irish Catholic—*Barry*. These facts, which are but a few of those which might be adduced, prove conclusively that Catholicity is still, what she was in the Middle Ages, the steadfast friend of free institutions.⁴³

CONCLUSION

To conclude: Can it be that Catholicity, which saved Europe from barbarism and a foreign Mahomedan despotism, which in every age has been the advocate of free principles, and the mother of heroes and of republics, which originated *Magna Charta* and laid the foundation of liberty in every in this country should have equal rights with their Protestant fellow-citizens.

⁴³ De Tocqueville, a good judge in such matters, says "that the Catholics constitute the most democratic class of citizens in the United States." And to account for this fact, he enters into a course of philosophic reasoning to show that this is a necessary result of Catholic principles.—"Democracy in America," p. 281 (New York edition, 1838).

country in Europe, and which in our own day and country has evinced a similar spirit, is the enemy of free principles? We must blot out the facts of history, before we can come to any such conclusion! If history is at all to be relied on, we must conclude, that *the influence of the Catholic Church has been favorable to Civil Liberty.*

CHAPTER VI

AGE OF POPE GREGORY VII

THE DEPOSING POWER *

IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECT

REGORY VII was the first Roman Pontiff who ever attempted to depose a temporal prince. Hence his character, as well as that of his age, has awakened much interest and elicited considerable historical inquiry. Men have naturally sought to know why, and under what circumstances, he maintained the claim to a power seemingly so extraordinary in one who was the successor of the poor fisherman of Galilee. We will attempt to throw some light upon this subject, with the aid of M. Voigt, the distinguished biographer of the Pontiff. His testimony will be deemed unexceptionable by the mass of Gregory's opponents; while, based as it is upon original documents, carefully examined, it must have great weight with all impartial men.

* *Histoire du Pape Gregoire VII et de son siècle, d'après les monuments originaux. Par J. Voigt, profes. a l'université de Halle, Traduite de l'Allemand, par M. l'Abbé Jäger. Paris, 1838; 2 vol. 8vo. ("History of Pope Gregory VII and of His Age, from Original Documents." By J. Voigt, Professor at the University of Halle. Translated from the German by the Abbé Jäger. Paris, 1838. 2 vols. 8vo.)*

SOCIETY STRUGGLING INTO FORM

The age of Pope Gregory VII was one of peculiar interest, crowded with great and important events. It was an age of transition. After the civil convulsions which followed the subjugation of Europe by the Northmen in the fifth century, society, as if exhausted by over-exertion, seems to have settled down into a species of lethargy in the tenth century, reputed by most writers the darkest and most dreary of all the period called the Middle Ages. The eleventh century presents us the picture of society again struggling into form. To attain this consistency, however, it was necessary for it again to pass through the storm of revolution. Commotions in society are sometimes as necessary for its moral health, as storms are in nature for the purification of the atmosphere.

HILDEBRAND

Whoever will take the trouble to compare the tenth with the twelfth century, must be convinced that, during the intervening period, a great man has passed, and that his passage has been marked by great events. That great man was Hildebrand, afterwards Gregory VII; and the great events are those which M. Voigt so graphically describes in his history. This embraces the period of thirty-nine years, from the birth of the Emperor Henry IV in 1046, to the death of Gregory in 1085.

M. Voigt could not have chosen a more interesting or important subject, and few could have done it

greater justice. His history is not confined to Gregory. Along with him, he portrays the various remarkable personages who flourished at the same time, and with most of whom the Pontiff was thrown into frequent contact. Among these, the chief is Henry IV, of Germany, the exact antithesis of Gregory in all things, *infamous* for everything for which *he* was *famous*. He and all the others appear before us like finished portraits from a master hand; their features and form so clearly marked, that they remain fixed in the memory, and will ever afterwards be recognized as old acquaintances.

HIS CONTEMPORARIES, HISTORICAL PORTRAITS AND
PARALLELS

Great men often appear in groups, like the stars in heaven; and, among the distinguished contemporaries of Gregory, we may mention St. Peter Damian, St. Anselm, Bishop of Lucca, and Desiderius, Abbot of Monte Cassino, in Italy, St. Hugh of Cluni, and Cardinal Hugh de Dié, in France; Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury, and William the conqueror, in England; and Anno of Cologne, Rodolph, Duke of Suabia, and Otto of Nordheim, in Germany. In the South of Italy, the famous Chevalier Robert Guiscard is seen extending the Norman power almost as much as William the Conqueror extends it in England; and the attentive reader will not fail to remark a great similarity in the characters and fortunes of these two fierce, but chivalrous Norman chieftains. He will also detect in the life, position in relation to Henry IV, splendid

designs, varied fortunes, and remarkable death of the great Anno, Archbishop of Cologne, many traits common to him with the great Cardinal Wolsey of England; though if the comparison be strictly carried out, the palm will, perhaps, be awarded to Anno. Had Henry IV listened to his counsels, and not been guided too much by the ambitious Adalbert, Bishop of Bremen, and by others, the history of the eleventh century would have been very different. If the reader be fond of drawing parallels, he may find many things in the life, character and varied adventures of the great Otto of Nordheim, to remind him of that pink of medieval chivalry, Richard *Cœur de Lion*.

NAPOLEON'S OPINION OF GREGORY VII

Finally, in the excellent Empress Agnes, the mother of Henry IV, he will discover the most estimable traits of character; and in the famous Matilda of Tuscany, the particular friend of Gregory, he will find all the qualities which constitute a great and good princess. She combined, in a remarkable degree, the coolness, firmness, and zeal of Gregory, with the warlike talents and impetuous bravery¹ of Otto of Nordheim. All these characters reappear under the pen of M. Voigt, fresh, and, as it were, instinct with life; and it requires but little exertion of fancy, to behold them again acting over before us their respective parts in history, Gregory.

¹ See Voigt (vol. ii, p. 436) for a curious instance of her skill in arms, when, at the head of her troops, she surprised and defeated Henry's army in Lombardy.

VII being the great master spirit and actor, whose influence is felt by them all. Few men, perhaps, have been more differently judged by their contemporaries, and by posterity, than this illustrious Pontiff. That he was a great man, with transcendent genius, and that he did great things, all readily admit: and Napoleon, an excellent judge of human greatness, showed his discrimination when he said: "If I were not Napoleon, I would wish to be Gregory VII!" By his enemies he has been represented as an ambitious man, who aimed at universal dominion, both civil and ecclesiastical, reckless of the means for attaining his object. Some Catholics have thought that he pushed the claims of his See too far. The Church has erected altars to his memory, as to one of the most devoted champions of her liberty and rights, and one of the greatest promoters of stainless purity among her clergy.

HOW THE PONTIFF HAS BEEN ATTACKED BY HIS ENEMIES, AND HOW DEFENDED BY VOIGT

It is a singular stroke of Divine Providence, that perhaps the best apology for the course thus pursued by the Church, comes to us from a Protestant pen, and from that Germany too, with which Gregory sustained so long and so arduous a struggle. M. Voigt has defended him, not, as he had been attacked, by mere declamation, but by the evidence of facts drawn from contemporary writers, such as Lambert, Paul Bernried, Domnizo, Berthold of Constance, Leo Ostiensis, Hermann, Fiorentini, Aventin, Cardinal Arago, and others. He has thor-

oughly sifted the testimony of these authors, and presented the facts in chronological order, yet woven into a narrative almost as interesting as any work of fiction. Though a Protestant, yet he is so just and moderate, and withal so accurate, that the severe critic, the Abbé Jäger, who translated his work into French, found little of importance to correct, and still less to add to the narrative; and besides a remarkably well-written, well-reasoned, and highly wrought introductory essay of one hundred pages, his notes are chiefly valuable as exhibiting the original text where the historian had contented himself with a simple reference. The manner of M. Voigt is very similar to that of the great English historian, Lingard, embracing many facts and little theory; while his style, though less terse and condensed, is perhaps more lively, and his narrative more detailed and interesting.

It is not our purpose to write a lengthy review of M. Voigt's work, which we would fain hope soon to see in an English dress. We wish merely to direct attention to the new light, which so unexceptionable a witness has shed upon the character and actions of a man, than whom few have been less known, and more misrepresented.

THE GREAT IDEA OF GREGORY

Gregory had to sustain a twofold relation to the world: the one spiritual, to the Church, of which he was the visible head; the other temporal, to civil society, in the framework of which he was an important part. Our object is to show, from the facts

which M. Voigt alleges and *proves*, that, in both these capacities, his influence was highly beneficial; while his motives were of the purest and most exalted nature. His great idea was, *to purify the Church, and through its agency to reform and civilize society*: and his acts were just such as the condition of the times required for the attainment of these two great purposes. The chief fault of those who have censured him has been, that they have judged his conduct, not by the circumstances of his own time and the jurisprudence which then obtained, but by the maxims and ideas of the present day—than which nothing could be more unjust.

I. Our blessed Redeemer foretold² that scandals should come; and even under His own eyes, and in the college of Apostles, though taught immediately by Himself, a most grievous scandal was given, by that traitorous disciple who sold his Divine Master. It was not then to be expected, that the members of the Church, even the ministers of her altars, should be all of them stainless. It was not promised that the gates of hell should not *rage* against the Church, but that they should not *prevail*.³ The storm was to howl fiercely around the ship of the Church, while pursuing her voyage over the stormy ocean of life; but in the hour of her greatest peril, when everything would threaten shipwreck, and the timid would exclaim: “Lord, save us, we perish,” Jesus would arise from His apparent slumber, extend His hand over the boiling waves, command the winds and the sea, and suddenly there should come a great calm.⁴

² Matt. xviii.

³ Matt. xvi.

⁴ Matt. viii. 25, 26.

This miracle has been renewed in all the great emergencies of the Church. "She may be attacked, she cannot be conquered." Persecution has tried her, and she came out fresher and better than ever. Heresy has assailed her on all sides, and yet she has gained the victory. At the period of which we are speaking, a flood of immorality broke in upon her, penetrating even within the sacred chancel of her sanctuary; and yet from this new and most terrible ordeal she was destined likewise to come out unharmed and unsullied. Perhaps the preservation of the Church, under such circumstances, is a greater miracle of God's Providence than any other recorded in her annals.

**HIS RELATIONS TO SOCIETY AS ITS SPIRITUAL HEAD—A
TORRENT OF ABUSE STEMMED**

Gregory VII was the chief instrument employed by God for the correction of the crying moral evils of his age. His vast mind immediately perceived the source from which this torrent of disorders flowed; and he directed all his gigantic efforts for nearly thirty-six years, towards drying it up. The Church had unworthy ministers, and she had to weep over many immoralities, even at the foot of her altars, precisely because she had been enslaved by the princes of the earth—her canons contemned, her liberties crushed, and her very sanctuaries sacrilegiously invaded, by those who were clothed with the civil power.

THE QUESTION OF INVESTITURES

The right of investiture, claimed chiefly by the emperors of Germany, was the principal cause of all these evils of the Church. The emperors, having richly endowed the bishoprics and abbeys, claimed the right of nominating the incumbent, and of investing the subject thus appointed with the *insignia* of his office. The new incumbent took an oath of fealty, which required, among other things, that he should join the standard of his sovereign with his armed retainers, whenever called on to do so. In the appointment to bishoprics, more regard was often paid to birth and military talents, than to the virtues and learning required by the canons. What was still worse, these preferments were often purchased by money, and the most unworthy men were thus thrust into the holy places. Under the wicked and dissolute Henry IV, simony, and consequent immorality, became the order of the day in Germany and northern Italy, where his power in this matter was the more baneful because it was less questioned. The Church was thus disgraced with wicked ministers, because the princes of the world *had thrust them on her.*

ANCIENT MODE OF NOMINATING TO BISHOPRICS

The right of investiture was manifestly an usurpation of the German emperors and other princes, at least in the sense in which it was understood and carried out by them. It was viewed not only by Gregory, but by many other holy men of the time,

such as St. Anselm of Lucca,⁵ and St. Peter Damian,⁶ as the chief cause of all the evils which they so much deplored. It was in direct opposition to the enactments of the ancient canons regarding the election of bishops. These secured to the Church the right of choosing her own ministers, as well as perfect freedom in the exercise of that right. If the people often cooperated in the election of bishops, during the first centuries, it was more as witnesses of the good qualities of the candidate, than as electors; and perhaps one cause of the modification of discipline in this respect was the well-grounded fear, that when the people would become more numerous, and perhaps less pious, popular clamor might impair the liberty of election.

Princes never had the right of nomination to bishoprics, without the consent and concurrence of the Church. The thirtieth canon of those called the Apostolic, believed by the learned to exhibit pretty accurately the discipline of the three first centuries of the Church, pronounces sentence of deposition against bishops who receive their sees from princes. The fourth canon of the great Council of Nice, held in 325, regulates the manner of appointing bishops by the prelates of the province, or by at least three of them, without even alluding to any right of the people or of princes in the matter.⁷ The twenty-second canon of the eighth general council, held at Constantinople in 870, goes still farther, and pronounces an anathema against any lay prince, who

⁵ *Sermo ii.*

⁶ *Ep. ii, et passim.*

⁷ *Labbe, Concil. tom. ii, p. 30.*

would interfere in the “election or promotion of any patriarch, metropolitan, or bishop, so as to prevent its canonical freedom.”⁸ Many other authorities could be produced, to prove that the claim set up by the princes of the eleventh century not only had no sanction from the Church, but was in the very face of all its rights and laws. By being liberal to the Church, temporal princes acquired no right to enslave it, and to introduce into its bosom the feudal, on the ruins of the Canon Law.

Yet this was precisely what was attempted to be done; and for resisting this usurpation and contending strongly until death for the liberty of the Church, Gregory has sustained so much obloquy! Could he have done otherwise without betraying his duty, and, to use his own strong language, “by satisfying the caprices of princes, being hurled with them into the abyss?”⁹ So far was this pretended right of investiture carried, that the German emperors even asserted it in regard to the Roman Pontiff himself, thereby seeking to crush the liberty of the Church in its head—in the only one able effectually to resist the ever encroaching usurpation.

CONTEST BETWEEN THE POPES AND THE EMPERORS OF GERMANY—PAPAL ELECTION

The emperors had more than once attempted to elect and depose Popes at will; but they had always met with powerful resistance from the Church, and never succeeded in causing more than temporary

⁸ *Ibid.* tom. viii, p. 1141.

⁹ Ep. ii, 11.

confusion. Sometimes called to the Eternal City, as its natural guardians, to quell popular insurrection, or to assert the liberty of the Church, they often went beyond the mere office of protection, and sought to rule in spiritual, as well as in temporal matters. In one of his journeys to Rome (after the middle of the tenth century) Otho the Great, Emperor of Germany, with the aid of the antipope—styled Leo VIII, whom he had himself set up—had a decree or canon passed, by which the emperor's right to interpose in the election of the Pope was recognized; and though the provisions of this law were annulled by Henry II, in the beginning of the following century, they were renewed by Conrad II, and they subsequently became the cause of incalculable evils to the Church. In consequence of this innovation on ancient law, there were three claimants to the Papal chair at one time; and Henry III, the father of Henry IV, paid a visit to Rome, and succeeded in suppressing the schism, without, however, giving up the pretended privilege from which this and other evils had sprung.

▲ VITAL QUESTION

It required a man of the iron nerve of Gregory VII to wrest from the hands of the German emperors what they would not have willingly resigned! And how wisely and how effectually he did it, M. Voigt fully informs us, and we shall have occasion to show more at length hereafter. Those writers who would fain persuade their readers that the controversy about investitures was one of mere form,

show only their profound ignorance of history. It was a vital question, one of liberty or slavery for the Church.

ST. PETER DAMIAN

So long as kings and princes exercised this pretended right, can we wonder at the dreadful evils which St. Peter Damian so pathetically laments? Can we be astonished, that this good man should weep, like another *Jeremiah*, over the calamities of God's people, and the desecration of His holy places; or that, reposing near the sanctuary which he so much loved, he should shed tears over its desolation and abandonment, while the courts of princes were thronged with a worldly minded clergy? ¹⁰ Can we wonder, that when he had exhausted all the resources of prose, he resorted to poetry, and wept in plaintive numbers over the evils of his day? And that finally, disgusted with a world which he did not love, and which he despaired to be able to reform, he fled to solitude, and devoted himself entirely to prayer?

HIS RELATIONS TO GREGORY

M. Voigt ascribes Damian's retirement to a feeling of envy at Hildebrand's superiority. But there is little foundation for this assertion. The expressions of Damian, in which he calls Hildebrand "his holy adversary," ¹¹ and "his hostile friend," ¹² and others

¹⁰ Ep. i, 15.

¹¹ "Sanctus satanas meus."

¹² "Hostilis amicus meus."

of the same kind, only show some diversity of opinion and temperament between the two illustrious men; but they do not prove that there existed any jealousy. Hildebrand opposed his retiring, but Pope Alexander II permitted it, on condition that Damian would come forth again whenever the church should need his services.

SIMONY AND DISORDER AMONG THE CLERGY

Hildebrand was cool and deliberate, Damian was ardent and enthusiastic; but they both labored together for the same glorious object—the extirpation of simony and incontinence among the clergy, and the stricter observance of the ancient canons. And that they were always good friends, may be gathered from a letter written by Damian from solitude, in which, complaining that Hildebrand had not written to him oftener, he speaks of the manner in which he had ever cooperated with him: “in all his (Hildebrand’s) struggles and victories, he [Damian] had thrown himself in, not as a mere fellow soldier or follower, but as a thunderbolt,” an expression which shows the impetuosity of his zeal.¹³

There is no doubt that the language of St. Peter Damian should be received with some allowance; but yet it appears certain that the evils deplored by him were both widely spread and inveterate. How deeply seated was the malady, may be gathered from the long and obstinate resistance of the clergy of Milan and Lombardy to the proposed reformation;

¹³ Ep. ii, 8. “*Certamnibus et victoriis, ego me non commilitonem seu pedissequum, sed quasi fulmen injeci.*”

from the repeated tumults in Milan consequent upon the zealous efforts made by the holy deacon, Arialdo, and by the pious chevaliers, Landulph and Herlembaud, to enforce the canons of the Church; from the tragical death of Arialdo, so graphically related by M. Voigt;¹⁴ from the outrages which, in 1074, disgraced the Synod of Erfurt, over which Sigfried, Archbishop of Mayence presided, as legate of the Pope, and where he so strenuously sought to extirpate abuses; from the elections of the two antipopes, Cadolous and Guibert, and the awful troubles brought upon Rome and the Church by their wicked ambition: in a word, from the whole life of Gregory VII, which was one continued struggle against vice and immorality seated in high places. All these scandals and troubles were the work of a faction, it is true, but of a strong and powerful faction, aided and urged on by some of the greatest princes of Europe, among whom Henry IV of Germany, and Philip I of France were the most conspicuous.

HILDEBRAND UNANIMOUSLY ELECTED POPE—HIS EARLIER EXPERIENCE

Such was the sad state of things in the Church, when Hildebrand was unanimously elected Pope by the clergy and people of Rome, in 1073. He was the very man who was best calculated to meet the emergency. He brought to the Pontifical chair an experience of twenty-four years, during which he had been actively employed in various important affairs by previous Pontiffs. From the pontificate

¹⁴ Vol. I, p. 153.

of the holy Pope Leo IX (A. D. 1049), who had made him Archdeacon of the Roman Church, to the day of his own election, he was the right arm of the Church's defense. So great was the confidence entertained in his judgment, that St. Peter Damian,¹⁵ says that he himself followed his opinions as he would the canons of the Church. It was he who had prompted Bruno, Bishop of Toul, nominated Pope by Henry IV, to take off the *insignia* of the Papacy at the Monastery of Cluny, to walk as a pilgrim to Rome, and not to accept of the tiara, until he should be canonically elected by the clergy and people of that city. This was his first step towards the emancipation of the Church. He it was who advised, and perhaps even penned the famous canon¹⁶ of the Roman Council, held under Nicholas II, in 1059, which fixed the mode of electing the Sovereign Pontiff by the cardinals, with the consent of the people, and made the approval by the emperor a mere personal privilege to belong to those emperors *only*, to whom it would be specially granted by the Pope.¹⁷

HIS EXPERIENCE, COOLNESS AND WISDOM

Having brought to the pontificate so much wisdom, learned from experience, he employed it all in the government of the Church. He undertook nothing rashly. He was as cool and deliberate in taking

¹⁵ Ep. iii, 8.

¹⁶ Labbe, tom. ix, p. 1103.

¹⁷ It is one evidence of the great genius and wisdom of Gregory VII that the requirements of this canon are followed, with but few modifications, to this day, in the election of the Pope.

his measures, as he was firm and persevering in carrying them out. All his efforts for the extinction of simony and incontinence among the clergy, and every stage of his struggle with Henry IV, of Germany, evidence his coolness and wisdom. He was consistent throughout. Everything tended to the carrying out of his great plan to secure the freedom of the Church, and then to enforce its ancient canons. He steadily pursued this darling object for nearly thirty-six years. He was too clearly convinced of the soundness of his principles, and of the justice of his cause, ever to waver or falter in his course for one moment.

NOT EXCEEDINGLY STERN

Yet he was not excessively stern, as many are inclined to believe. He had a tender and susceptible heart, sometimes filled "with an immensity of joy,"¹⁸ and anon, "straitened with the most cruel grief."¹⁹ His conduct towards Henry IV, when the latter humbly sued for reconciliation with the Church at the Castle of Canossa, is not an exception to his general character in this respect. He indeed treated Henry with some rigor, because he had too much reason to doubt the sincerity of the young king's repentance, and the events furnished too sad a proof of his forecast. Yet it must be borne in mind, that, though Henry immediately after broke all his solemn oaths, Gregory abstained for more than three years from renewing the excommunication, though repeat-

¹⁸ "Gaudii repleti immensitate," Ep. i, 40.

¹⁹ "Circumvallat me dolor immanis," Ep. ii, 49.

edly urged to do so. And when he did renew it, it was with the greatest reluctance.

He was severe towards the obstinate, but at the first sign of repentance his heart melted with sympathy. His kind treatment of Berengarius, who recanted his errors in the Synod of Rome in 1079, is a well known evidence of this. He even offered to pardon the wicked antipope Guibert of Ravenna, in case he would repent,²⁰ and he repeatedly proffered to receive Henry himself again into the Church, even after all his enormities, if he would but repent and repair the enormous scandals he had given.²¹ He himself informs us, that he was accused of too much leniency,²² and Cardinal Hugh de Dié, his legate in France, complained of the facility with which he absolved those ecclesiastics who had been excommunicated in French councils.²³

HIS WONDERFUL ACTIVITY

His activity was prodigious. By means of his legates he was everywhere actively engaged, by means of councils both provincial and national, in reforming abuses, and restoring ecclesiastical discipline. His vast mind grasped the whole world, and yet entered everywhere into the most minute details! He has left nine books of letters written

²⁰ Ep. v, 13.

²¹ Cardinal Arago gives us Gregory's reply to the Romans, when pressed by Henry's besieging army, they besought the Pontiff to absolve him. Gregory offered to do it, but only on the condition above named. Voigt, vol. ii, p. 416.

²² Ep. i, 77.

²³ Voigt, vol. ii, p. 293.

to every class of persons, from the prince on his throne to the monk in his cell. His penetrating eye reached even Africa, where the few Christians who were then left were trampled under foot by the Moors.²⁴ He was very solicitous about the reunion of the Greek with the Latin Church. He was the first to conceive the project of a crusade, one great object of which was to aid the struggling Christians of the East, and to heal the Greek schism.

This conception alone would show the vastness of his mind. He made two efforts to arouse Europe to a sense of its importance; but Europe was not yet prepared to throw herself on Asia. Hungary, Bohemia, Russia, Denmark and Spain were all sharers in his pastoral solicitude. He seemed to attend to each thing, as though he had nothing else to do; and even when beset by the greatest difficulties, he relaxed in nothing his ceaseless labors for the general good of the Church. He celebrated in Rome no less than eight councils, all of which were very numerously attended.

HIS CORRESPONDENCE

His letters exhibit perhaps the best portrait of his mind and heart. His style is similar to that of St. Gregory the Great, whom he greatly admired. Those who accuse him of worldly ambition have either not read, or have not understood his correspondence. It all breathes far higher motives, and a spirit not of this world. M. Voigt has exhibited a condensed analysis of his principles and maxims as

²⁴ Ep. i, 22, 23. See Voigt, vol. i, p. 35.

extracted from his letters; which analysis evinces great industry, and a thorough acquaintance with the subject.²⁵

HIS MORAL COURAGE

But the quality which most distinguished Gregory was his moral courage. No dangers appalled him; no obstacles or difficulties deterred him from doing what was right. His soul grew with the events which it had to encounter. “The most fearful outbreaks of regal or popular displeasure could not move his fixed purpose. He had planted himself on eternal truth, and the wind and the rain might beat upon, but they could never stir him.” Who will not admire the calm composure which he manifested when he was seized on Christmas-night, at the very altar, by an armed band of assassins led on by Cencius; when he was cruelly beaten, his hair plucked out, his pontifical robes torn off, and himself dragged off a prisoner to their leader’s castle? Who will not admire the forbearance which requited this outrage with so effectual an interposition as screened its chief perpetrator from the effects of popular indignation? Who will not be struck by the noble courage manifested by him, in the last council he held in Rome, in 1083, when, beset on all sides with difficulties innumerable—with Henry’s victorious troops threatening Rome—he arose in the council, and, with the face “more of an Angel than of a man,”²⁶ spoke with an eloquence so stirring as to

²⁵ *North American Review* for July, 1845.

²⁶ See *Labb. Concil* tom. x, p. 402: “*Ore magis angelico quam humano.*”

move all who were present even unto tears! This noble courage was his great ruling feeling, strong even in death; and the memorable words, which were the last he uttered before he expired, an exile at Salerno²⁷—"I have loved justice, and hated iniquity, and therefore I die in exile"—contribute much to give us an insight into his character.

HIS TEMPORAL RELATIONS TO SOCIETY

II. Such were the qualities of Gregory; such the difficulties he had to contend with in fulfilling the duties growing out of his spiritual relations to the Church. He had to encounter obstacles yet more fearful in his temporal relations to civil society. He could not expect to carry out his favorite plan of reformation without being thwarted at every step by the princes of the earth. Besides the pernicious influence of their example, their claims in regard to investiture were, as we have seen, openly at war with the liberties, and subversive of the dearest interests of the Church. Gregory saw fully the difficulty of his position. He perceived the storm which was gathering, and he was prepared to endure its most merciless peltings. He quailed not, either in the anticipation, or when the fearful reality more than justified his worst forebodings.²⁸

The charges brought against him by his enemies

²⁷ "Dilexi justitiam, odi iniquitatem; ideo morior in exilio."—Paul Bernried, c. 110.

²⁸ Speaking of Henry (Ep. i, 11), he uses this remarkable language: "Et certe tutius est defendendo veritatem pro sui ipsius salute adusque sanguinem nostrum sibi resistere, quam ad explendam ejus voluntatem iniquitati consentiendo secum, quod absit ad interitum ruere."

are many, but they may be reduced to two principal heads.

1. He is accused of ambition, in seeking to make the kings of Hungary, Dalmatia, Sardinia, Spain, and England take the oath of fealty to the Holy See: and he is charged with aiming at universal dominion in civil as well as in ecclesiastical matters. 2. He is greatly blamed for having attempted to depose Henry IV, Emperor of Germany.

We will endeavor briefly to meet both these accusations; and also to prove that, in his relations to princes, his powerful influence was highly beneficial to civil society.

DISTRACTED STATE OF EUROPE

1. All the writers of the eleventh century paint Europe as being in a most distracted condition. England was passing through a revolution under William the Conqueror, and the South of Italy was also being revolutionized by Robert Guiscard; while Spain was struggling with the Moors, and Germany was torn by the most fierce civil wars between Henry IV, and the princes of the Empire. France was not free from internal troubles, while its southern frontier was threatened by the Saracens; and in the East, Constantinople was tottering to its fall, and the rising dynasty of the Turks menaced with extermination the Christian name, in places where it had been once so illustrious. In civil society everything was in a state of disorder; the laws were trampled under foot with impunity; and *might* and *right* were viewed as almost synonymous terms.

The weak were oppressed by the strong; and the feudal system, which had just obtained a firm foot-hold in Europe, was bringing forth its bitter first fruits—of anarchy, petty civil wars, and bloodshed. St. Peter Damian²⁹ draws a graphic picture of the manner in which the feudal chieftains robbed one another, and then recklessly “set fire to the cottage of the poor laborer.” And Gregory VII, in many of his epistles, weeps over the murders and confusion of his time, calling it appropriately “*the age of iron.*”

PRINCES SWEARING FEALTY TO THE POPE

In this distracted condition of things only one power was universally acknowledged and respected: that of the Church, and of its visible head, the Sovereign Pontiff. And we are not to be surprised at seeing princes often invoking this power whenever they got into difficulties with their subjects, or with one another. Nor was this always a mere mark of respect to the Holy See—it was oftener a prudential measure for their own security. When, by taking the oath of fealty to the Pope, they became the feudal subjects of the Holy See, they had a right to expect from it protection against foreign invasion of their kingdom or domestic usurpation of their throne. Thus, in return for a fealty, which included chiefly spiritual obedience to the Pope, with a very small annual offering to the Papal treasury, they often received from the Holy See the most substantial favors. Any one who recklessly invaded a State

²⁹ Ep. i, 15, *supra cit.*

thus placed under the “protection of St. Peter,” after having been admonished to desist, incurred, if he persisted, the sentence of excommunication.

HIS PROTECTORATE RECOGNIZED AND INVOKED

Such being the case, we are not astonished that kings and princes in those troubled times often placed their crowns at the Pontiff’s feet. Thus Demetrius, King of Russia, sent his son all the way to Rome to implore³⁰ Pope Gregory VII to receive his kingdom as a fief of the Holy See; and Gregory in his answer,³¹ seems to grant his request with some reluctance, and requires of him what was usually required in such cases, that he should promise to assist his liege sovereign (the Holy See) “*in all things just.*” Many kings in dying left their kingdoms under the protection of the Pope; and whenever a powerful baron or neighboring prince sought to violate this testamentary disposition, to the prejudice of the infant heir, the Pope interposed, as in the case of Vezelin,³² who attempted to usurp the throne of Dalmatia. Thus also Henry III, left his infant son Henry IV, under the guardianship of his widow, the Empress Agnes, and of Pope Victor II.

It is not necessary to multiply facts to prove that one great feature of medieval jurisprudence was the express or tacit acknowledgment of a kind of universal protectorate in the Roman Pontiff. We find even the fierce Robert Guiscard bowing down and

³⁰ “*Devotis precibus.*” (Ep. ii, 74.)

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² See St. Gregory, VII. Ep. vii, 4.

taking the oath of fealty to the Holy See. It is proper, however, to observe here, once for all, that the oath of feudal vassalage did not imply unlimited obedience—much less did it enforce a slavish submission in all things to the will of the liege lord. Feudal allegiance was very different from that of modern times. The former was peculiar to the Middle Ages, and its duties were few and clearly marked, requiring at the same time, as a condition *sine qua non*, the compliance with certain correlative duties on the part of him to whom the oath was taken.

Gregory could not hope to carry out his plan for reforming the Church without the cooperation of temporal princes. From many of them he had reason to expect the most determined opposition. Hence, it is not at all surprising, that, intent upon *one great idea*, he sought, from the very commencement of his pontificate, to rally around him the princes of the earth. This will explain to us his course of conduct in regard to Dalmatia, Hungary, Sardinia, and part of Spain, which, in various letters, he sought to prove, to have been in former times feudal dependencies of the Holy See. We read of no resistance to his claims in any of these countries, which proves that they were well founded, and that the documents he alleged were genuine. This should put to shame those maligners of the sainted Pontiff, who would fain persuade us, that he forged documents to suit his own purposes! To prove that the princes and people of the Middle Ages were not advocates of passive obedience, even to the Pope, particularly where temporal matters were concerned, we may

adduce the refusal by William the Conqueror, to take the oath of fealty to Gregory. His answer to the Pontiff is brief, blunt, and characteristic of the Norman: yet even *he*, while positively refusing to take the oath, says nothing in his answer to impugn the motives of Gregory.³³ He had been the early favorite of Gregory, who had extolled him as a model of princes;³⁴ and on his refusal to take the oath, the Pontiff in his letter to his English legate, Humbert, only complains of the bluntness of the English monarch, and of his refusal to suffer the English Bishops to visit Rome. This last fact will perhaps explain to us his motive for endeavoring to induce William to take the oath.

GREGORY NOT AMBITIOUS

Those who would charge Gregory with motives of mere worldly ambition have not learned the first elements of his character. Had worldly grandeur been his object, why did he not obtain it, as he certainly could have done? Why did he not doff his humble and coarse apparel, and clothe himself in the “soft garments of kings”? Why did he not keep up a splendid court, and live luxuriously in the midst of earthly pomp and display? Why did he not die a great temporal prince, instead of a poor exile at Salerno? Ambition, forsooth! Nothing was more foreign from his mind and heart than ambition. All his letters breathe a higher spirit; all his acts imply much higher motives. He was not a man to swerve

³³ See his answer to the Pontiff in Voigt, vol. ii, p. 330, note.

³⁴ See Voigt, vol. i, p. 425.

one iota from the plain path of duty for all the kingdoms of the world! "I would rather," says he, "undergo death for your salvation, than obtain the whole world, to your spiritual ruin. For I fear God, and therefore value but little the pride and pleasures of the world."³⁵

HIS LONG STRUGGLE WITH HENRY IV

2. Much has been written of the Pontiff's long and painful struggle with Henry IV of Germany; but those who have taken occasion from it to cast all the blame on Gregory, betray great ignorance of the history of that remarkable contest. In the first place, who was Henry, and what was his character? He was the most powerful sovereign of his day, and his vast empire extended over more than half of Europe. His influence was immense for good or for evil. He was in his twenty-third year when Gregory was raised to the pontificate. His many natural good qualities had been almost destroyed by a vicious education from his earliest youth—the stream of his existence had been tainted in its very course. He had given into the most criminal excesses from the time he had first mounted the throne, and from a confirmed *débauché*, had become the most heartless and cruel of men. For his criminal excesses, and his shameful sale of bishoprics and abbeys, he had been already summoned to appear before the Holy See, in the last year of Pope Alexander II.³⁶ This summons had no other effect upon the dissolute young

³⁵ Ep. vi, 1.

³⁶ See Voigt, vol. i, p. 23.

king than to cause him to enter momentarily into himself; but on the death of Alexander his excesses became more enormous and insufferable than ever. He no longer observed any bounds. His court resembled more the seraglio of a Turkish sultan than the residence of a Christian prince.

THE NERO OF THE TWELFTH CENTURY

Perhaps a greater monster never disgraced a throne. To obtain the objects of his criminal passions, he stopped at nothing—husbands, fathers, or lovers were removed by assassination. He knew how to refine on cruelty: he could smile on you one day, and have a dagger sent to your heart the next! In adversity, he was the meanest of sycophants, and the most crouching of slaves: look at him at the Diet of Tribur,⁸⁷ when the Saxons were victorious, and the princes of the empire had abandoned him; look at him also at the Castle of Canossa, when suing for reconciliation with the Church. When flushed with victory, he was the most ferocious of tyrants—crushing and trampling in the dust those who had already submitted: witness the horrible manner in which he overran Saxony, Thuringia, and Suabia, as most graphically painted by Voigt. He was as perfidious, as he was cruel. He could be bound neither by treaties the most solemn, nor by oaths the most sacred. In one word, he was the Nero of the Middle Ages, and his contemporaries gave him this title. All these charges could be substantiated by facts almost innumerable from M. Voigt, were it deemed necessary.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* vol. ii, 168-9.

Such was the monster with whom Gregory had to deal. He could not escape a contest with such a man, without sacrificing his most sacred duty. For, in addition to Henry's private and political crimes, he made a regular traffic of the bishoprics and abbeys, intruding into them the most unworthy subjects; thus deluging the Church with a flood of scandals. He would sell a bishopric to one, and if another subsequently offered more, he would have the former deposed as simoniacal, and bestow the investiture upon the latter! By this abuse, some of the principal churches had two, and that of Milan, had three bishops at one time! Thus schisms were added to the other evils of the Church.

How did Gregory deport himself in his controversy with Henry? The limits of this article will not allow more than a very brief *exposé* of the various stages of that contest; and those who may wish a fuller account of it, are referred to the luminous work of M. Voigt. We will endeavor to present in order the various facts of the case, scattered through the two volumes of our author; and we think it will be seen that a simple unadorned statement of facts is the best possible vindication of Gregory's course.

1. From the very commencement of his pontificate, he employed every means in his power to win the heart of Henry. He wrote to him two letters ³⁸ full of sweetness, unction, and a divine eloquence, in which he appealed to him by every consideration that was calculated to touch his heart, and arouse

³⁸ See them in Voigt, vol. i, 407-8. M. Voigt thinks that these letters are masterpieces of prudence and eloquence. In general, all the epistles of Gregory breathe sentiments fresh from a heart warmed by divine charity.

him to a proper sense of his duty: in both of them he however hinted to him, that, in conformity with the jurisprudence of the age, the right to the crown could be secured to him *only* on condition “of his governing according to the law of God, and protecting the liberty of His holy Church.” To his own efforts his influence added those of Henry’s mother, the pious Empress Agnes, and of the Countesses Beatrix and Matilda, his [Henry’s] relatives; not to mention those of the great and good Anno, Archbishop of Cologne.

2. When Henry, notwithstanding the hopes with which his answer had at first inspired Gregory, still continued in his evil courses, the latter did not immediately excommunicate him. He proceeded slowly and cautiously. His object throughout seems to have been to correct, not to crush Henry. He first excommunicated the unworthy bishops who had purchased their sees from him; then five of his evil counsellors: hoping that he would profit by these unequivocal demonstrations. And whenever Henry made the least show of repentance, with what paternal tenderness did not the Pontiff felicitate him!³⁹ About this time (A. D. 1073), Henry wrote him a most submissive and hypocritical letter;⁴⁰ and though Gregory saw through the deceit, and knew well that Henry’s difficult political position alone had prompted the letter, yet with what sweetness did he not answer this letter!

3. Nearly two years later, in 1075, occurred the infamous plot of Cencius, and the outrage upon

³⁹ See his Ep. iii, 3.

⁴⁰ Voigt, vol. i, p. 281.

Gregory's person, alluded to above. The Pontiff had every reason to believe, that Henry and Guibert, Archbishop of Ravenna, were at the head of this plot; and yet he forbore. He does not even allude to it in any of his controversies with Henry!

4. In the same year, 1075, the brave Saxons, after a noble struggle against tyranny, submitted to Henry, on the faith of a solemn treaty at Gerstungen, in which he promised to protect their property, and the liberty and rights of their princes.⁴¹ Henry violated his solemn oaths, and trampled the brave Saxons in the dust. Crushed and bleeding, they appealed to the Pope for protection. The "Holy See," says M. Voigt,⁴² "*was the only tribunal, which could set any limits to imperial despotism, as a second defender of humanity.*" He might have said, that it was the *first*, and, in many cases, the *only* defender of *humanity*, of human liberty and rights. In those times of anarchy and confusion, to whom could the oppressed cry, but to the common father of Christians? Could Gregory be indifferent to their cry for relief? Could he do otherwise than hear their appeal, listen to their complaints, and endeavor to redress their wrongs? Henry himself had also appealed to the Holy See against the Saxons;⁴³ so that Gregory saw both parties appealing to him to settle their quarrel. By the fact, he was virtually chosen *arbitrator*. Who can then blame him for taking cognizance of the cause, and for deciding in it according to justice? Would not posterity have cen-

⁴¹ Voigt, vol. ii, p. 78.

⁴² Vol. ii, p. 98.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, ii. p. 97.

sured him, had he neglected the appeal, thus solemnly interposed? At the instance of Rodolph, Duke of Suabia, and of other German princes, Gregory had been induced⁴⁴ nearly two years previously, in 1073-4, to act as *mediator* between Henry and the rebellious Saxons. He had accepted the office, and had written a most eloquent letter⁴⁵ to many bishops and princes of Germany, imploring them to use their influence to stop the effusion of blood, until the difficulties could be amicably adjusted. But amidst the 'din of arms, this voice had not been heard. About the same time, Henry had sent ambassadors to Rome to complain of the Saxons:⁴⁶ so that he may be said to have appealed twice to the Holy See. Gregory, therefore, had a right to interfere in the political affairs of Germany, under each of two characters—that of *mediator*, and that of *arbitrator*. Why have his enemies concealed these facts?

OTTO OF NORDHEIM

5. And who were the Saxons, whose cause Gregory espoused? They were the oppressed: they were the advocates of *liberty*! The decision of Gregory against Henry was a blow aimed at tyranny, and struck for the rights of the people. If ever a people deserved liberty, the Saxons merited that boon. Instead of being the fierce savages that some historians would fain represent them, they were remarkable

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 360.

⁴⁵ Ep. i, 39.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. i, p. 381. Where he cites for his authority, his favorite historian, Lambert.

for their accurate perception of right and justice, and for their firm, yet moderate advocacy of their liberties. At the famous convention of the Saxon people at Nockmeslove, in 1073, Otto of Nordheim made a speech, which for solid reasoning, and moving eloquence, perhaps equals any effort of our own Patrick Henry.⁴⁷ Its stirring accents rang throughout all Saxony, and its effect was not only to thrill every bosom, but to cause the war cry "*To arms! to arms!*" to be heard from every valley and hill-top! To show in what light the oath of fealty to the king was viewed in those days, we will present the following extract from Otto's speech:

Perhaps you hesitate to break the oath you have taken to the king, because you are Christians! What! To the king! So long as he was king for me—so long as he showed himself such, I have scrupulously observed the oath I had taken: since he has ceased to act like a king, and to discharge the duties of a king, I owe him fealty no longer. Courage then! We do not march against the king. No—but against the enemy of our liberty; against the enemy of our country. . . .

This reasoning only alleges a principle generally received in the Middle Ages: that *obedience* and *protection* are correlative terms, and that the former ceases to be obligatory where the latter is wanting.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Whoever will read the portion of this famous speech, given us by M. Voigt (vol. i, p. 288-289), will scarcely think this an exaggeration. If some one would take the trouble to collect together the various famous speeches of the Middle Ages, and present them in a good English dress, he would add to the stock of medieval literature. This speech, two or three of Gregory before Roman councils, and one of Urban II at the Council of Clermont in 1095, might belong to the collection.

⁴⁸ See decision of a council of Toledo referred to by Guizot—“*Lectures*,” where this principle is connected with the etymology of the word *rex, recte*.

According to this principle, Henry could have been deposed without the sanction of the Pope; and in fact the princes of the empire seriously thought of doing so before Gregory had spoken. The Saxons, in appealing to the Pope, had not only expressly recognized in him the power of deposing princes, but had said that the German Empire was a fief of the Holy See.⁴⁹ In fine, Gregory, while declaring *under all the circumstances* that the Saxons were absolved from their oath of allegiance to Henry, did precisely what every American and every lover of liberty would have done.

A STROKE FOR LIBERTY

6. In answer to the appeal of the Saxons, Gregory wrote a letter to Henry, in which, after having employed all his eloquence to reclaim him, he threatened him with excommunication, unless he repented and reformed.⁵⁰ Flushed with his recent victory over the Saxons, Henry despised the admonitions of the Pontiff. He assembled a conventicle at Worms, in 1075, which attempted to depose Gregory, and to set up Guibert, Archbishop of Ravenna, in his stead.⁵¹ He directed two insolent letters to the Roman people and to the Pope, to announce to them the decision of the mock council: and he sent Rolando, a secret emissary, to insult the Pontiff to his face in the council which he was to open in Rome. Gregory screened the envoy from the punishment

⁴⁹ See Voigt, vol. ii, p. 98.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

which his insolence provoked: he read the insulting documents himself to the council, with the utmost *sang-froid*; and, in order to let the excitement subside, he adjourned the session until the next day. He then calmly explained, to the one hundred and ten assembled bishops, the whole of his past relations with Henry, and his wish to secure the freedom and peace of the Church. It was only at the most urgent request of the council that he consented to excommunicate Henry.⁵²

SUMMARY OF THE WHOLE CONTEST—MODERATION
OF GREGORY

7. It is manifest, that, in the whole proceeding, Gregory wished to correct, and not to degrade Henry: Hence, in a letter to the princes and bishops of Germany, he promised to readmit him on repentance.⁵³

8. It was a law of the German Empire that if a prince remained under excommunication for one year, he forfeited his crown.⁵⁴ Hence it was, that Henry was in so much haste to be absolved by Gregory at Canossa.

HOW AND WHY THE PONTIFF DECLARED HENRY DEPOSED

9. If Gregory deposed Henry, the consent of princes and people at that time secured to him the right to do so. This is so certain, that it is not

⁵² See Voigt, vol. ii, p. 115, *et seq.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

deemed necessary to adduce facts to prove it. Voigt admits it;⁵⁵ and his translator proves it by incontestable contemporary documents.⁵⁶ Gregory then usurped nothing; he is fully borne out by the spirit and the jurisprudence of his age.⁵⁷

10. Finally, though Henry was not sincere in obtaining absolution from the excommunication at Canossa; though in less than fifteen days thereafter he broke all his solemn oaths; yet Gregory abstained for nearly four years from renewing the excommunication. His legates in Germany went beyond their instructions, when, at the Diet of Forchheim in 1077, they approved of the election of Rodolph. He often lamented this imprudent step.⁵⁸ He viewed it as premature, and calculated to foment, rather than to remedy, the troubles of Germany and of the Church; and he declares, that "he would rather suffer death, if necessary, than be the cause of the troubles of the Church."⁵⁹ He labored incessantly to heal the divisions of Germany, and to stop the effusion of blood; council after council he assembled in Rome; diet after diet he appointed to be held in Germany,

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 214.

⁵⁶ See his Introduction, p. lix. *et seq.*

⁵⁷ See a work by Gosselin, published in Paris, 1829, entitled, *Pouvoir des Papes sur les Souverains au Moyen-âge*. See also the admirable work of Count de Maistre, *Du Pape*. Voltaire also admits this.

⁵⁸ This fact does not appear to be generally known. Even Feller (*Dict. Hist. Art. Greg.* VII) ascribes the election of Rodolph to Gregory: and this too, in the face of many of the Pontiff's letters, and of his solemn declaration to the contrary at the Roman Council held in 1080! He also asserts, that Gregory excommunicated Henry again, immediately after their reconciliation at Canossa in 1076: whereas, though his legates in Germany renewed the excommunication in 1077, yet the Pontiff himself abstained from doing so until 1080.

⁵⁹ Ep. iv, 24.

for the final settlement of the matter. But Henry thwarted all his measures: so far from seeking, he was afraid of that justice which Gregory wished to have meted out to him. *He*, then—and not Gregory—was responsible for the protracted civil war in Germany.

Such was Gregory VII, as shown by his acts. Henry triumphed over him for a time; and he died an exile; but he died as he had lived—virtuous, calm, unshaken, and happy. Henry died, reduced to the lowest degradation, abandoned by all and despised by all, even by his own sons, who had successfully carried on a civil war against him. Gregory was “the Hercules of the Middle Ages: he enchain'd monsters, crushed the hydra of feudalism, saved Europe from barbarism, and, what is more beautiful still, he illustrated Christian society by his virtues.”⁶⁰

An able Protestant writer appreciates his noble courage, as well as the lofty motives which animated it, in the following eloquent language:

Had Hildebrand's sick heart failed him then, it would not have been strange; but he looked at his crucifix, at the image of his forsaken, dying, and yet victorious Master, and grew strong; for that told him how little the final triumph of a moral truth can be judged of from immediate success or failure. “And I, too,” he murmured to himself, in words which, a few weeks later, were the last upon his lips, “And I, too, have loved justice and hated iniquity, and I die an exile.” The future was hidden to him; but he knew that God ruled, that the great thoughts, which by his struggles he had made familiar to man, rested not on his strength, but on an eternal basis; and that, though he was passing away, the Omnipotent remained as the world's ruler; he knew that he had sown the seed, and that God would give the harvest.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Abbé Jäger, *Introd.*, p. xcix. ⁶¹ *North American Review*, 1845.

OPINION OF VOIGT

We conclude with the last words of M. Voigt's history:

It is difficult to bestow on him exaggerated eulogy: for he has laid everywhere the foundation of a solid glory. But every one should wish to render justice to whom justice is due; let no one cast a stone at one who is innocent: let every one respect and honor a man who has labored for his age, with views so grand and so generous. Let him who is conscious of having calumniated him, reenter into his own conscience.

The tribute thus paid by Voigt to Pope St. Gregory VII, should also, in all justice and gratitude, be rendered to those Ages of Faith of which he saw the dawn and rising glories.

APPENDIX

ON THE MAGNA CHARTA OF ENGLAND

THE controversy which was carried on between the English Barons and Pope Innocent III, and the Bull published by the Pontiff annulling the Charter, have been referred to as conclusive evidence that the Catholic Church is opposed to liberty. The best refutation of this charge is found in a simple and unvarnished statement of the facts, as furnished by reliable historians. From these it will appear that the act of Innocent constitutes an exceptional case, easily explained by the circumstances accompanying it; that it was prompted chiefly by reasons extrinsic to the Charter itself; that his Bull had no practical results, even at the time it was issued; and that both his predecessors and his successors in the Papal chair sanctioned, at least did not condemn, the political franchises contained in that famous instrument. Here are the facts, with the authorities by which they are supported:

1. The Charter was not a new document, drawn up for the first time by the Barons in 1215. It was more than a hundred years older, having been issued by Henry I, shortly after his accession to the throne in 1100. Cardinal Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, found this older document in the archives of London, and brought it to the notice of the Barons.¹ Many of its most valuable provisions were fifty years older, having been contained in the laws of Edward the Confessor; some of them, as trial by jury, dated back to the reign of Alfred the Great, in the tenth century.

2. The Charter contained sixty-seven articles, most of them regarding special rights and immunities connected with the feudal

¹ See Hurter, *Histoire du Pape Innocent III et de ses Contemporains*, 3 vols. 8vo (Paris, 1838), Vol. iii, p. 324-5. This history is full, learned, and reliable, drawn from contemporary authors. See also Lingard, "History of England," John.

system; and these have long since become obsolete, together with the peculiar system of jurisprudence of which they were an appendage. With the exception of the two provisions securing *habeas corpus*, and the right of representation before taxation, M. Hurter thinks that all the articles of the Charter may be reduced to two heads: "the guaranty of the requirements of natural justice, and the renewal of anterior rights."²

3. Though the Barons were in the right as to the substance of their demands, yet they more than once transgressed the bounds of moderation, notwithstanding the efforts of Cardinal Langton and the Bishops to restrain their impetuosity and to prevent violence. Thus, after John had signed the Charter, he called upon them in their turn "to subscribe the charters declaring that they were bound by oath and homage to be true to him against all manner of men, and to defend his rights and the rights of his heirs to the crown. They refused; and the Archbishop, with several prelates, gave a solemn attestation of their refusal."³ A portion of them went still farther, renewing the war against John, contrary to their solemn engagement, so lately entered into at Runnymede. "In many localities, the officers of the king were arrested or driven away, some royal possessions were ravaged, and the forests devastated."⁴ The civil war having been thus rekindled in England, and John having ravaged the possessions of the Barons, they, after some hesitation, "unanimously determined to offer the crown to Louis, the eldest son of the King of France."⁵ Thus, in a noble contest for liberty against a tyrant, the Barons greatly damaged their cause by violent measures, and by an attempt to upset the fundamental laws of the kingdom in calling a foreigner to the throne.

4. Perhaps a worse monarch than John never sat upon the English throne. Innocent had excommunicated him for his excesses, particularly for his sacrilegious oppression of the Church. He was as mean in adversity as he was cruel in prosperity. Finding that matters were going against him, and that his crown was in danger, he now professed repentance, took the cross as crusader, and placed himself as a vassal, his kingdom as a fief, under the special protection of the Holy See; thus becoming, of his own choice, a vassal of the Pope. The zeal of

² Hurter, vol. iii, p. 331.

³ Lingard, John, vol. iii, p. 59; (Edit. London, Dolman, 1844).

⁴ Hurter, *ibid.*, p. 335.

⁵ Lingard, *ibid.*, p. 64.

the royal penitent far outstripped the wishes of the Pontiff, who had not anticipated, nor expected any such result;⁶ but, in accordance with the peculiar jurisprudence of that period, he did not feel himself at liberty to decline the trust thus reposed in the See of Peter by a feeble prince beset with difficulties, and whom he believed sincere. It was not unusual for monarchs, during the Middle Ages, when surrounded by danger, to invoke the protection of "St. Peter" against violent assaults; and such appeals, far from depressing, tended rather to elevate the throne which sought so high a protector. Innocent was deceived by the wily representations of the English monarch, who found some plausible arguments in the violence of the Barons. The ambassadors of John found the Pope at Anagni; and they "spoke of the revolt of the Barons, of their exciting spirit, and of the declaration of the King, importing that the Roman Church being the suzerain of his kingdom, he could consent to nothing without its concurrence. The Barons," they added, "without regarding the appeal interposed, have occupied the capital by treachery, and have extorted by force of arms the liberties which they had demanded. They showed to the Pope the articles of the Charter, by which John thought himself most aggrieved. Innocent read them, rubbed his eye-brows, and said: 'Do the English Barons think to be able to overturn the throne of a king invested with the Cross, and who is under the protection of the Apostolic See, and put another in his place, contrary to the will of the Roman Church? . . . Such an injustice shall not go unpunished!'"⁷

5. In annulling the Charter, Innocent promised the Barons "that he would induce the King to consent to whatever might be just or reasonable, *to take care that all grievances should be abolished, that the crown should be content with its just rights, AND THE CLERGY AND PEOPLE SHOULD ENJOY THEIR ANCIENT LIBERTIES.*"⁸ Thus it is manifest that the Pontiff did not condemn the Charter on account of the liberties it contained, most of which were ancient, long established, and sanctioned by Rome itself. His motives for the act, as stated by himself, were as follows: That John had become his vassal, and he felt bound by the jurisprudence of the times to protect him; that the Barons had employed violence, instead of accepting the offer of redress by due course of law; and that they had violated the privileges

⁶ Hurter, *ibid.*, p. 235.

⁷ Hurter, *ibid.*, p. 337.

⁸ Lingard, *ibid.*, p. 62. He quotes Rymer.

which all Christian nations had granted to the champions of the Cross, in rebelling against John, an enrolled crusader.⁹

6. But did the act of Innocent really annul the Charter? Did the Barons recognize his right to do so? Did even the Bishops accept the decision of Innocent? They did not. They maintained that the rigorous measures adopted by Innocent "had been obtained on false suggestions, and for objects not within the jurisdiction of the Pontiff. He had no right to interfere in temporal concerns; the control of ecclesiastical matters only had been intrusted by Christ to Peter, and Peter's successors."¹⁰

7. Far from being practically annulled, the Charter was solemnly renewed and confirmed, under the express sanction of Honorius III, Innocent's successor, two years afterwards, in the reign of John's son, Henry III. This monarch ascended the throne in his eleventh year, inheriting from his father a disastrous and bloody civil war. "But Honorius, as feudal superior, declared himself the guardian of the orphan, and commanded Gualo (his legate in England) to reside near his person, watch over his safety, and protect his just rights. The legate discharged his trust with fidelity, and found in the earl marshal a coadjutor actuated by the same zeal and concurring in the same sentiments."¹¹ . . . "The Charter was again confirmed, but with additional alterations. It was provided that the widow should have for her dower the third part of all the lands which had belonged to her husband during the coverture, unless she had been endowed with a smaller portion at the door of the church. . . . Lastly, it was enacted that *all men should enjoy equal liberties.*"¹²

8. Between the year of its adoption and the date of the reformation, the Charter was confirmed no less than *thirty-eight times*: "Six times by Henry III, thrice by Edward I, fifteen times by Edward III, six times by Richard II, six times by Henry IV, once by Henry V, and once by Henry VI."¹³ We do not read that any Roman Pontiff ever objected to even one of these numerous ratifications; some of these—as that under Henry III referred to above—were made with the express sanction of the Holy See.

⁹ Lingard, *ibid.*, p. 60.

¹⁰ Lingard, *ibid.*, p. 62. He quotes the original Latin of their reply, from Rymer and Matthew Paris.

¹¹ Lingard, *ibid.*, p. 81.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 82.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 58, note.

9. From all these facts it is apparent that the action of Innocent III in regard to the Charter, together with his summary decision of the controversy between John and the Barons, constitute an exceptional case, involving other issues besides that of the franchises claimed by Cardinal Langton and his associates. To estimate aright the merits of the discussion, we should not lose sight of the peculiar system of jurisprudence which then obtained, on which the decision of Innocent was based. Whenever Roman Pontiffs were called on to interfere between a tyrannical prince and his subjects, during the Middle Ages, their influence was almost invariably thrown in the scale of the popular rights and liberties. Such a thing as absolute monarchy, sustained by standing armies, was then wholly unknown; and the subjects were thought to have rights as well as sovereigns. The doctrine of passive obedience had not yet been broached. Among the objects which induced Innocent III to convene the general Council of Lateran, as set forth in his letter of convocation, we find the following: "to consolidate the faith, to extinguish enmities, to re-establish peace, to cause oppression to cease, *to protect liberty*, to determine princes and people to carry succor to the Holy Land, etc."¹⁴

¹⁴ Hurter, *ibid.*, p. 275. The letter of convocation was issued in 1213, and the Council met in 1215.

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